Music and Media in the Arab World

Edited by
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Introduction

Music and Media in the Arab World and *Music and Media in the Arab World* as Music and Media in the Arab World: A Metadiscourse

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The extended title of this introductory essay encapsulates the idea that the volume you're now reading is itself an instance of the phenomenon—the intersection and interaction of music and media in the Arab world[1]—it purports to study and represent, and thus constitutes a valid object of analysis in its own introduction. In other words, this book is about itself, at least in part. Or, inasmuch as most humanistic writing is already metadiscourse, perhaps this introduction could be regarded as a meta-metadiscourse on music and media in the Arab world.

For when 'music' is broadly construed to include 'discourse about music' (and for the ethnomusicologist, indeed for the contemporary music scholar, such recursive breadth is essential) the present volume (published in Cairo, and written by Arabic-speaking authors involved in Arab music) itself appears as a form of 'music in the Arab world,' shaped by, and disseminated through, the Arab print media system (including the American University in Cairo Press).[2]

While the global system of academic publishing is rarely the object of academic studies—*a fortiori* for studies concerned with cultural content (since most academic discourse depends on maintaining a clear distinction between the object of study, and the metalanguage used to discuss it)—the claim of self-referentiality is particularly apt for this volume, which is unusual in the

following regard: a number of its essays were written by influential public intellectuals and critics whose work regularly appears in the popular Arab press, that is, by writers whose work academics would ordinarily situate within the realm of discourse that is the scholarly object of study.

Thus the chapters by Elmessiri, Abdel Fattah, Al-Barghouti, and Abdel-Latif have been previously disseminated (in slightly different forms) through more 'popular' Arab media. These critical opinion pieces, already diffused within contemporary Arab discourse, have therefore already affected perceptions and attitudes of the Arab public (including perhaps Arab musicians), and may even have already impacted (indirectly, at least) the Arab music industry itself. And they are treated as cultural phenomena—as 'data'—by other chapters in this book.

In a further act of self-reference, a number of this volume's chapters explicitly cite the authors of other chapters (or even the chapters themselves) in the same volume (and not only those of Arab public intellectuals), bringing more than half the book into a connected citation network, as shown in Figure 1. This network is only partly the result of prior publication, indicating also parallel social networks among researchers and critics themselves, networks that could easily be extended (especially via significant Arab musical figures, such as the esteemed Egyptian composer Mounir Al Wassimi, scholar-critic Zein Nassar, or composer-technologist Moataz Abdel Aziz—all contributors to this volume) into the broader social world of Arab music media.

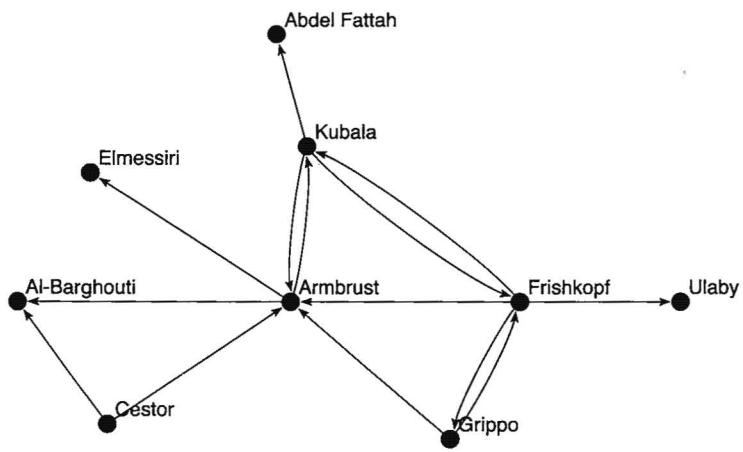

Figure 1. Network diagram indicating inter-author citations in this book (arrows point from citing to cited author).

In addition, the contemporary media are distinctive for their own infinite regress of self-referentiality through the postmodern pastiche (sometimes intentional and ironic, more often not)—the continuous transformation of signifier into signified, the permutation and recombination of media and meaning, the tangle of critique and object, a set of semiological processes already greatly facilitated by technologies of digital cut-and-paste editing across media (text, image, audio, video) in the latter part of the twentieth century, before being massively web-accelerated in the twenty-first. This book participates in these processes, and its introduction celebrates them.

Indeed, the categorical jumbling of discourse and metadiscourse, music and text, Arabic and English, criticism and scholarship, 'Arab' and 'West,' promoted by this book and highlighted in this essay (implicitly an acknowledgement of the futility of their separation), is salutary, I think, as a small but meaningful step toward ameliorating some of the rifts of the postcolonial world, for the unexamined Western claim to the exclusive possession of a scholarly metalanguage (however implicit) is only an echo of a more far-reaching European universalism (however faint).

Beyond its philosophical dimensions, (meta-)metadiscourse also serves as a personal introduction to an intellectual venture whose tortuous course has wound through the past five years of my life.

The genesis of this mediated text, like that of many mediated communications, lay in an unmediated face-to-face social event, a bilingual conference I organized in 2004, on May 19 and 20, with support from the American Research Center in Egypt (where I held a fellowship and served as Scholar in Residence from September 2003 to August 2004), entitled "Music and TV in Egypt: New Directions (a conversation about music, media, technology, culture and society in contemporary Egypt)."

Having spent many years studying music and Sufism in Egypt in the 1990s, I'd returned to Cairo in 2003 with a rather different research agenda. Building on the seminal work of Peter Manuel (1993) and Salwa El-Shawan (Castelo-Branco 1987) I sought to explore the arc of commercial cassette production and consumption in Egypt, from its origins in the 1970s to its contemporary decline in the face of piracy, on the one hand, and competing 'new media'—the Internet, satellite television, mobile phone, and private-sector radio (also 'new' in Egypt)—on the other, initially via a study of Egypt's national recording company, Sawt al-Qahira (SonoCairo) (Frishkopf 2008b).

This new research direction was not unrelated to my earlier work, for since the advent of the cassette medium in 1970s, Egypt, catalyzed by—and embedded in—a radically transformed economic environment (Anwar Sadat's *infitah*)[3] that was suddenly favorable to free markets, global trade, and private enterprise, the careers of some professional Sufi singers (the *munshidin*), formerly constrained to local recognition and performance contexts, were dramatically boosted with the rapid emergence of a private-sector cassette industry, as small cassette producers mushroomed all around the country, as well as with the development of informal networks for cassette recording, duplication, and exchange among fans. Understandably, many of the new cassette producers specialized in precisely those genres of folk and religious sound that had been excluded (implicitly or explicitly) from older state-controlled media institutions: radio, television, and SonoCairo, whose aesthetic filters (enforced by state censors and 'listening committees' charged with maintaining ethical-aesthetic standards) were always informed (indirectly or directly) by the politics of taste (as many of this book's chapters explicate).[4]

But my new topic also resulted from a conviction that as a maturing, socially and intellectually responsible ethnomusicologist I should now finally turn from the music I loved (Sufi music, and the Arab art music heritage called *al-musiqa al-'arabiya*) toward that which enjoys overwhelming social salience today—mediated music—regardless of the degree of overlap between these two categories. It is by means of aesthetic and affective criteria (that is, the music they like) that most ethnomusicologists enter their field, but scholarly relevance, it seems to me, necessitates engagement with the salient socio-cultural phenomena of the day.

Worldwide, mediated music is certainly one of those phenomena, as the current profusion of popular music studies in ethnomusicology clearly attests.[5] As elsewhere, such music (most of it more or less overtly commercial) is omnipresent in Arabic-speaking regions through mass media channels, which have continued to proliferate in number and type over the past one hundred years: analog phonograms (first cylinders, then discs), radio, film, television, cassette tape, VHS tape, CD, DVD, satellite television, mobile phone networks, and the Internet.

Such music is deeply implicated in social, economic, and political networks, both as an expressive medium and as a formative one, though it is only rarely investigated by social science and humanities scholars outside of music studies, perhaps because of music's frequent tendency (as a partly non-discursive expressive form, disguised as 'mere' entertainment, and often relegated to the cognitive background for both culture observers and participants) to fly under the radar of critical discourse (Frishkopf 2009); perhaps because (and perhaps for similar reasons) within academia, sonic culture (like film soundtracks) is (wrongly) perceived as secondary to the more explicitly semiotic realms of text and image (Bull and Back 2003), which are also always more compatible with academia's own preferred communicative media (speech-text-print), and thus more 'visible' through the scholarly 'lens' (and such visual metaphors are themselves telling);[6] or perhaps because many social scientists and humanists feel themselves (rightly or not) incompetent to investigate it.

Since the onset of media technologies, Arab scholars, intellectuals, music connoisseurs *(sammi'a)*, trained musicians, and social conservatives have frequently criticized newly emerging mediated music as aesthetically inferior and low-brow, overly commercial, excessively Westernized, even dissolute. The social importance of this music thus tends to be downplayed (if not decried) by those eager to assert what is sometimes assumed to be 'timeless' Arab 'art' or 'classical' traditions (the *turath*, or heritage) of *al-musiqa al-'arabiya* in its stead, though ethnographically *turath* is a highly chronocentric term, a temporally moving target observed, nostalgically, as those genres or styles preceding—by a generation or two—music popular among those who are presently young.[7]

Furthermore, the supposed 'timelessness'—both in the Arab world and elsewhere—of pre-mediated music can, on the contrary, often be dated precisely to the onset of technological mediation, due to media's ironically twinned effects of both rapidly transforming, and preserving (usually for the first time) musical sound.[8] Technologies of mass media (typically linked to nationalist agendas and sentiments, especially in the postcolonial world where such agendas have been particularly urgent) therefore always generate profound nostalgia for whatever unmediated musical phenomena they happen to encounter first, by fashioning, out of the flux of such phenomena, durable mediated objects later assumed to represent the infinite expanse of an unmediated past, before socially marginalizing those same objects within a new mediated music system centered on the moving target of current musical fashion. Within a widely diffused scholarly discourse (for example, Touma 1996, chapter 1), later mediated music is therefore regarded principally in negative terms, except insofar as it is capable of preserving purported musical timelessness, despite the fact that media always play a

critical (if well-disguised) role in the cultural invention and maintenance of 'classical,' 'roots,' and 'folk' categories.

Such negativity is itself worthy of study, linking as it does advocates of Arab nationalism with a late Orientalist discourse of the West adhering to a decline-theory of Arab culture and civilization, and perhaps resulting also from something similar to what Rashid Khalidi terms the "heady influence" of nationalist ideologies on scholarship itself (Khalidi 1991, 1364), in favor of music which elite Arab discourse itself deems worthy of support. Thus only lately has the mainstream of Middle East studies (scholars of history, literature, politics, and, to a lesser degree, anthropology) turned toward fuller consideration of currents of mediated popular and transnational culture (Abu-Lughod 1989, 1997; Beinin 1994; Booth 1992; Cachia 2006; Gershoni 1992; Ismail 1998; W.F. Miller 2002; Mitchell 1989; Saada-Ophir 2007; Shannon 2003b; Shechter 2005; Sreberny-Mohammadi 1990; Starrett 1995; Stein and Swedenburg 2004; Tucker 1983; Wedeen 2002).

A systematic analysis of the relation of media and music throughout the Arab world is a large undertaking, much bigger than the project that culminated in the present volume. A plurality of extant scholarly sources concerns Egypt, which has in any case remained—until quite recently—the undisputed center of music production, and which provides a ready source of examples illustrating the principal socio-musical trends of the past hundred years or so.

Since the turn of the twentieth century, increasingly rapid musical change—in sonic content, social relations, and cultural meaning—has been tightly connected to developments in the nature and extent of media in the Arab world, themselves responding to shifting technological, economic, legal, and political environments, and incorporation within a global media economy. At the same time, the centrality of music within audiovisual media—particularly radio, cinema, and television—has shaped production formats and pushed technological adoption. As authors in this volume argue, music media reflect, form, contest, and reimagine social realities, providing key affective indices linked to the formation of social networks (real or virtual), cultural trends, and individual identities. Music media also become objects for *public discourse* (and such discourse is also 'music,' broadly speaking) carried by many of the same media channels carrying music itself.

In Egypt, print publications about music—scholarly, technical, pedagogical, and popular—date from the late nineteenth century (such as *al-Muqtataf*; see Racy 1985, 166), while foreign companies (initially, British Gramophone)

produced the first audio recordings around 1904, supporting an expanding, literate, increasingly affluent musical culture, and the advent of musical stars enjoying previously inconceivable celebrity (Racy 1978).

But music itself was rapidly changing as a result of such mass dissemination. For instance, improvisation and extended performer-audience interactions in live musical performance had supported an emotional resonance known as *tarab*. Early mechanical recordings—limited to a few minutes of sound and a small musical group performing directly into a horn, and separating performer from listener—may have preserved instances of nineteenth-century melodies and rhythms, but the evolution of this technology radically transformed musical sound and practice, ultimately undermining the *tarab* aesthetic (El-Shawan 1980, 91–93; Frishkopf 2001; Lagrange 1994; Racy 1976, 1977, 1978, 1985, 2003; Sawa 1981; Shannon 2003a).

Despite a downturn in the 1930s–1940s, phonogram production continued uninterruptedly into the 1970s (when cassettes took over), shifting from

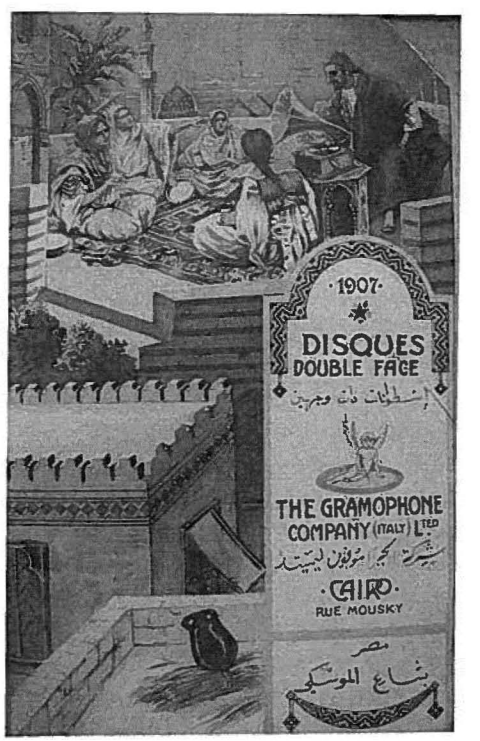

Figure 2. The Orientalist cover of a 1907 Gramophone Company catalog from Cairo. Photograph by Michael Frishkopf, from EMI Group Archive Trust, Hayes, UK.

cylinders to brittle shellac discs to flexible LPs, though playback equipment was never widespread in private homes due to its relatively high cost. As with cinema, phonogram-mediated musical consumption tended to occur in public spaces, primarily cafés *(ahawi)*, where radio and phonograph extinguished live music, and associated genres and careers.[9] (See Danielson 1997, 85; El-Shawan 1980, 91–93, 109–10, 112; Reynolds 1995, 106.)

Radio-broadcast music flourished in Cairo starting in the 1920s via private operators, while the Egyptian national radio service was established in 1934. Radio facilitated longer performances (though phonograms were often broadcast, too) and wider listenerships, but also restricted *tarab* and catalyzed further change (El-Shawan 1980, 94–95). As for phonograms, radio audiences were initially constrained by cost, though again cafés could broaden them. Battery-powered transistor radios, introduced in the 1950s, rendered the medium more widely accessible (Boyd 1993). (See Nassar in this volume.) Recording and broadcast studios, having become central nodes in musicians' social lives, strongly shaped their social networks, leading for instance to the meeting of prominent singers from Iraq and Egypt (see Ulaby in this volume).

But it was not only new media 'hardware'—technology—from the West that impacted Arab music in the twentieth century, but media 'software' as well, including increasingly audible sounds of Western and global musical trends (for instance, the worldwide sweep of the Argentine tango (Frishkopf 2003, 155)).

Radio broadcasts of Arab popular music also began to colonize the unmediated traditions of folk music production, long before the mediation of those traditions themselves. For instance, rural performers incorporated urban musical materials (melodies, texts, instruments) into their repertoires, a means of appearing modern and pleasing audiences increasingly accustomed to radio-transmitted urban sounds.

Less audibly, the same period also witnessed the importation of legal frameworks and organizations regulating ownership and use of mediated music objects in the Arab world, protecting the rights of mediated artists, but also defining and promoting the legal existence of artistic roles and aesthetic objects based on Western models for popular music production, and hastening integration with the global media economy.

According to such models, each performance (live or recorded) should be based on an underlying 'song,' with two creators—a composer *(mulahhin)* and a lyricist *(mu'allif)*—who hold performance and mechanical reproduction rights

to their works, while the recordings themselves are protected by other legislation. Throughout most of the Arab world, legal frameworks were modeled on French law, and new rights organizations (such as Egypt's SACERAU (Sociétés des Auteurs, Compositeurs et Editeurs de la République Arabe d'Egypte)) affiliated with the French SACEM (Société des Auteurs, Compositeurs et Editeurs de Musique), which continues to compute royalty distributions for Arab artists to the present day (Castelo-Branco 1987; Frishkopf 2004c; Racy 1978, 49).

These models and corresponding legal frameworks were developed within contrastive musical systems and economic environments of the industrialized, colonizing world. Introduced into the Arab world they tended to reproduce (alongside other colonial reproductions) the categories of those systems in a dissimilar socio-cultural environment, featuring, for instance, different divisions of musical labor and different concepts about musical products. Arab musical specializations had tended to be concentrated in a single individual, often a singer/performer/composer. As most music was not notated, the composition was not reified as a completely independent aesthetic object, but rather blurred into its performances, which were often improvised to some degree. The new legal framework required the differentiation of a fixed composition, independent of performance, and rights were attributed to its putative creators (composer and lyricist). Fully improvised genres (the vocal *mawwal* or instrumental *taqsim*) clearly didn't fit this model; at SACERAU, improvised performances were assigned a null composer—the 'heritage' *(turath)* (Frishkopf 2004b). This attempt to delineate 'composer' and 'composition' challenged the traditional musical system, and could even induce conflict. The celebrated Egyptian singer Umm Kulthum, for instance, often asserted ownership of the songs she sang, as her interpretations were central to the final product, but legally they were not hers.

Such changes in musical categories and roles were only proximately due to imported legal frameworks. More generally, they accompanied the absorption of Arab music within a global music media system, a system undeniably shaped by Western culture, but equally propelled by a supracultural economic logic: the drive for standardization, efficiency, and profit. As in the West, the evolution of that system has gradually entailed greater division of labor in music production, leading to increasing specialization, decreasing performer freedom (for instance, the decline of improvisation), and ever-larger production teams, partly obscured behind the singer-star, in order to maintain the mystique of individual talent. Today's cassette labels

explicitly divide artistic credit among singer *(mutrib)*, composer *(mulahhin)*, lyricist *(mu'allif)*, arranger *(muwazzi')*, sound engineer *(muhandis sawt)*, and producer *(mudir al-intaj)* (cf. Marcus 2007, 168; Castelo-Branco 1987, 38–39); in this volume, Wael Abdel Fattah insightfully observes that a singer's agent *(mudir a'mal)* now plays a pivotal career management role (for example, selecting repertoire, creating an image, even sculpting a body) analogous to that of the composer in earlier times. With the advent of music videos (since the early 1990s), there has been a sharp increase in the number of music production roles, primarily executive producer, agent, and director (Rizk 2009, 344), but also cinematographer, choreographer, dancer, set designer, makeup artist and—arguably—actor. As in the West, even visual and auditory roles are separated; Arab music connoisseurs and critics bitterly complain that female singers are selected more for looks than for musical talent, and studio-manipulated vocals (such as pitch correctors) are increasingly common (and necessary!).[10] These changes have been driven by musical mediaization and commodification, as well as a concomitant enmeshing within a global music system dominated by the West.

While the boundary between 'art' and 'popular' music is not clearly defined in the Arab world (Racy 1981, 6), a sharper boundary between 'popular' and 'religious' gradually emerged, as the latter category could not follow the former's path to the new media-based music economy. The bifurcation between religious and non-religious domains widened via the social process Gregory Bateson identified as "schismogenesis," the progressive polarization of a socio-cultural system (1972), as each domain distanced itself from (and defined itself in contrast to) the other.

Formerly the religious/secular boundary had hardly existed, as the ambiguous zone joining the two musical domains was broad (Frishkopf 2000; Nelson 2001, 153ff). Prior to the music media economy—and even a few decades in—most professional singers trained their voices in the call to prayer *(adhan)*, Qur'anic recitation, or religious hymnody *(inshad dini)*. Such training took place in the mosque, at the *kuttab* (Qur'anic school), or in the Sufi *hadra*, social spaces where great vocal talents could also be discovered and nurtured.[11] Tropes of love and longing abounded in both secular and religious repertoires, the latter understood, metaphorically, in a mystical sense. Amorous songs—not always drawing on explicitly religious poetry—could be performed in religious contexts, where the Beloved was interpreted as God, or His Prophet. Religious genres, such as the Egyptian *tawashih*, were performed for a wide range of non-liturgical events by the

mashayikh, Muslim singer-reciters bearing the title 'shaykh,' who might also perform overtly non-religious material, or even move entirely to the secular side, while retaining their titles: Shaykh Zakariya Ahmad, Shaykh Sayed Darwish. Religious training confered an ethical-musical authority, legitimacy, and authenticity into the early mediated period (Danielson 1990; Frishkopf 2002a). Sacred and secular song were united by shared social values.

But this state of affairs could not persist. With the rise of a commodified music media economy, and in conjunction with both educational secularization (and the concomitant decline of the *kuttab*) and Islamic reform (critical of inherited musical-spiritual traditions), the popular music system disengaged from religious vocal practice, generating profits by means of sex appeal (especially the rise of the female singing star), a direction the divinely principled religious genres simply could not take. Subject to different values, religious and popular domains became increasingly differentiated, the former necessarily remaining tied to live social contexts (ritual), the latter liberated from them. *Tarab* persisted primarily in the religious domain, where it has continued to serve an essential spiritual function (Frishkopf 2001).

This is not to say that religious genres were resistant to mediaization. They weren't. Early phonograms included religious repertoires, and Qur'anic recitation, Islamic sermons, and religious hymnody (Sufi music in particular) have all thrived on cassette tape (Frishkopf 2000; Hirschkind 2006; Nelson 2001, xxvii) and radio (Boyd 1993, 26); more recently new genres of Islamic popular music (including Islamic music videos) have become very popular. (See Armbrust, Kubala in this volume).

However, within the media domain, differences between the religious and non-religious are now clearly marked, though their shared media space has led to some searing paradoxes. For instance, in the 1930s, Egyptian radio, concerned about immodesty *('awra)*, banned female Qur'an reciters, all the while cheerfully promoting the careers of sultry female stars such as Asmahan (Daoud 1997, 82). More recently, gender marks the differences between audio-visually mediated religious genres and secular music, as the former realizes its value in the media economy: while the new Islamic music videos do not feature women (*a fortiori* the scantily clad dancing girls now *de rigueur* on the secular side), handsome young men are strikingly present. And juxtapositions of these two types—sequentially, from one video to the next on a single channel, or simultaneously, on channels (sometimes owned by the same company) broadcasting in parallel,[12] are starkly ironic.

To return to our history: The Egyptian musical cinema began in 1932 with *Unshudat al-fu'ad* (starring Nadra and Shaykh Zakariya Ahmad, who also composed the music) and peaked in the 1950s. Cinema tended to feature shorter, lighter songs, closely linked to image and drama, suitable for diegetic use. But the urban, public cinema was also a restrictive medium, providing few rural venues and discouraging respectable women, while ticket costs introduced class barriers. Musical film production declined after the 1960s, a result of recently introduced television, and nationalization of the cinema industry (Armbrust 2002, 238; El-Shawan 1980, 93), though these films continue to provide a television staple, and recent years have witnessed a revival of the musical film genre, in which singing stars and film stars become interchangable. Musical film (and especially televised song clips) constructed a new visual dimension of mediated music, emphasizing artist apperance and foreshadowing music videos in the 1990s. (See Nassar, Abdel Aziz in this volume.)

Musical mediation via phonograms, radio, film, and print (with all their intermedia synergies, for example, film songs on radio or LP; newspaper reviews) led to the emergence of an unprecedented star system in the Arab world (Danielson 2002; Racy 1978; Zuhur 2001). Through extensive dissemination networks enabled by these media, spheres of celebrity expanded far beyond what was formerly possible, bestowing upon certain artists enormous quantities of social capital, which could be exchanged for economic or even political capital. Yet mediated fame could also delegitimize; in an environment where music had always been closely tied to socio-religious values and occasions, a strong connection to unmediated musical-cultural value was critical to perceived authenticity. Performers thus have had to navigate a tricky terrain, exploiting the media without appearing to depend on it entirely. In this game, the first generation of media stars—straddling the border between pre-mediated and mediated eras, well-rooted in the former, benefiting from the latter—enjoyed a unique advantage.

After the 1952 revolution, Egypt's president Gamal Abdel Nasser, appreciating the ideological importance of mass media, quickly boosted the broadcast hours and wattage of national radio. By the early 1960s, music from Egypt (and produced not only by Egyptians, but by musicians from throughout the Arab world who gravitated to Cairo as its musical media center) could be heard across a broad swath of the Arab world via short and mediumwave broadcasts, thus becoming the first true pan-Arab music, a category called into existence by mass media.[13]

Pan-Arab music broadcasting during the Nasser era was characterized by a small number of state-owned radio and television channels, dominated by Egypt. This concentrated, state-controlled output tended to unify Arab listeners around a common media experience, to consolidate taste (according to dictates of Egypt's governmental 'listening committees'; see Abdel-Latif in this volume), and to project Egyptian music—especially the great pan-Arab media stars—as a primary affective basis for pan-Arabism.

The stunning success of these stars, especially Umm Kulthum, Mohamed Abdel Wahhab, Farid al-Atrash, and Abdel Halim Hafez, cannot be attributed simply to musical talent, but rather must be viewed as resulting from the power (high) and number (low) of pan-Arab media channels based in Egypt. Furthermore, the same factors that served to elevate particular artists to unprecedented fame simultaneously ensured that others (less talented, less ambitious, or less lucky) would remain obscure. Highly skewed distribution of celebrity is a property of commodified media systems worldwide (mediated celebrity appears to generate markedly scale-free networks—see Barabasi and Bonabeau 2003), but the reduced number of pan-Arab channels during this period intensified the effect in the Arab world.

Perhaps the quintessential example of succesful media navigation was the remarkable career of the Egyptian Umm Kulthum (c. 1904–75), whose immense talent combined with fortuitious birth at the cusp of the media era enabled her to stake a claim to pre-mediated legitimacy (she trained in Muslim vocal traditions), while benefiting enormously from the power of the media era, which developed almost exactly in parallel with her own life, catapulting her to pan-Arab celebrity (Danielson 1997, 196–97). This power was likely enhanced by the limited number of music media channels available up until the cassette era: with so little variety, everyone—young and old, rich and poor—necessarily tuned to the same ones, and Umm Kulthum thereby attained a breadth of fame (across regions, classes, and generations) never achieved before, or since. This social capital rendered her politically influential as well, particularly with President Nasser. Today, many Arabic speakers quip that "there can never be another Umm Kulthum." Perhaps so, but why? Vocal talent is surely available in all societies and eras. However, what may indeed never recur is the media topology that helped facilitate her magnificent career. Without minimizing Umm Kulthum's tremendous musical gifts, it must also be said that no one has been better *structurally* situated to become a media star.

Until the 1990s advent of satellite television, Egyptian broadcasts were entirely controlled by the state, supporting state power.[14] Except in Lebanon

(where private broadcasting has been linked to sectarian politics) the situation in other Arab countries was similar (Boyd 1993). With the recent development of satellite radio and television channels and their expansive viewership, the pan-Arab broadcast music media have become ever more powerful. However, there are new twists. Most new channels are private-sector and transnational, with production and financing distributed across the Arab world, primarily Egypt, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states, and Morocco, often targeting subregional audiences. Together with the dramatic increase in the number of pan-Arab radio and television channels, audiences have fragmented, stars have proliferated, and pan-Arab stardom has become both more ephemeral and geographically variable than before. With privatization and the absence of direct government censorship have also come market pressures driving the media system toward risqué imagery, though free-market limits are imposed by consumers themselves. (See Abdel-Fattah, Elmessiri, Al-Barghouti, Darwish, Kubala, El Khachab, Armbrust in this volume.)

The history of product (non-broadcast) media in relation to the state is rather different. In the beginning most recording companies operating in Egypt were private foreign firms (with the exception of Mechian's record-pressing operation in Midan Ataba (Racy 1976, 43–44)), until Cairophone emerged as the Egyptian branch of Lebanese Baidaphone, with singer-composer Mohamed Abdel Wahhab as partner (El-Shawan 1980, 109; Racy 1976, 41). Still, most records were manufactured outside the Arab world, and governments controlled imports. In the late 1950s, Egyptian singer-composer Mohamed Fawzy founded Misrphone and Masna' al-Sharq to record and manufacture LPs, the Arab world's first such enterprise, later entering into a partnership with Dutch Philips (through its Egyptian subsidiary Philips Orient). However in 1962 Misrphone was effectively seized as part of Nasser's nationalization program, and reinvented in the public sector as SonoCairo (Sawt al-Qahira) (Frishkopf 2008b). Smaller private labels lacked manufacturing arms.

Thus until the early 1970s, the Egyptian government exerted tremendous control over product media (objects for sale, such as LPs), as well as broadcast media, in Egypt (and therefore over pan-Arab music media as well). Directly or indirectly, the state could manipulate music media in a top-down fashion to promote desired artistic, social, and political values. Government 'listening committees' *(lijan istima')* screened music to be broadcast or recorded for lyrical, compositional, and vocal quality, based on aesthetic and moral criteria, precluding direct market feedback. Private-sector music

production was also affected, through the power of censorship. What wasn't actually produced by the state could easily be controlled via the censor (in Egypt, al-Raqaba 'ala al-Musannafat al-Fanniya), whose criteria (a trinity of sex, politics, and religion), once anticipated by producers, triggered self-censorship in the manner of Jeremy Bentham's (later Michel Foucault's) panopticon, entering (along with market factors) directly into the music industry's aesthetic computations for financial success. While the media certainly effected drastic musical change, particular elements (tonal, rhythmic, timbral, instrumental, social, emotional) of the old *tarab* music were retained in the mediated sphere, forging a distinctive 'Oriental music' *(musiqa sharqiya)* of intergenerational popularity, what A.J. Racy has termed the "central domain" of the mid-twentieth century (Racy 1981, 12). This mediated musical domain, accompanying a formative period (the ending of colonialism, and the emergence of independent states) of Arab nationalism, henceforth assumed a critical role within nationalist discourse as representing the highest aesthetic-ethical value of the modern Arab musical heritage. (Subsequent musical change thus posed political as well as aesthetic-ethical challenges to the nationalist intelligentsia; see Kubala and Elmessiri in this volume.)

This state of affairs was radically shaken in the mid 1970s, when the state's near production monopoly was undermined by the advent of cassette technology, enabling cheaper and faster production, smaller print runs, and hence an adaptable microeconomy of music (cf. Manuel 1993). Offering both drastically expanded capacity and user choice, cassettes filled the gap between status quo music production, and market demand. Government-owned SonoCairo was itself an early adopter. But in the atmosphere of *infitah*, cassette technology led to the proliferation of localized private-sector production, targeting particular market segments, and often keyed to the subregion, city, or even neighborhood of production, fragmenting the broader musical styles (for instance Racy's "central domain") associated with Arab nationalism and pan-Arabism. At the same time, cassettes could enable larger circulatory radii, as migrant workers, for instance, brought cassettes back home from abroad (facilitating significant popularity of certain Gulf stars in Egypt), forming deterritorialized communities of taste. (See Grippo, Kubala, Abdel Aziz in this volume.)

A new generation gap began to open, as the lucrative youth market could be separately addressed. Cassettes were relatively inexpensive, and player-recorders were portable. The new 'cassette culture' expanded via individual bootleg recordings of live events, especially Qur'anic and Sufi recitation

(in which improvisation marked every performance as unique), which were duplicated and exchanged through informal fan networks (Frishkopf 2000; Nelson 2001, xxvii, 235). As the economy became more open, the prices of cassette players (like those of radios or televisions) dropped as well.

During the 1980s, mediated music reception and playback equipment—radios, televisions, and cassette players—rapidly became ubiquitous in Egypt, a result not only of rising consumerism (flourishing in response to an increasingly free-market economy), but of remittances from migrant workers in the Gulf and Iraq as well. By the late 1980s it was unusual for an Egyptian household—even the most modest village home—not to own at least one radio, cassette player, and television. Entering domestic spaces, these media became more widely influential, not only through broader dissemination (especially to youth), but because of the ability (first of cassette, more recently of radio and TV) to adapt to the local environment, through a limited free-market system and higher media capacity: more stations, more channels, and more cassettes. Potential profits increased, and the cassette market expanded rapidly, becoming a veritable 'cassette revolution' (Castelo-Branco 1987).

Meanwhile, live music of performers (whether professional, semiprofessional, or amateur) working entirely outside the music media system (including what is generally known as 'folk' music), formerly sustained by cherished, unmediated oral traditions, began to be extinguished at a precipitous rate. Though revered in theory, in practice most such traditions were either neglected (in favor of more 'modern' mediated music), or absorbed into the media system (and radically transformed—musically, textually, and socially—as a result). Only a few genres (for instance, women's wedding songs and religious liturgies) have resisted this erasure of traditional oral culture, and the concomitant reduction of musical participation to a form of consumption, at least for the vast majority.

Unlike public-sector broadcast media, or even earlier product media, the private sector cassette industry responded rapidly to market pressures, and though the government censor retained the right to refuse publication, refusals were rare in practice (at least in comparison with cinematic censorship), due to high flow (Castelo-Branco 1987) combined with the fact that censorship criteria were not formulated for music per se, but rather for lyrics (see Nassar in this volume). Furthermore, cassette production operated, to a great extent, in an informal or semi-formal economy. The proliferation of duplication equipment (many cassette shops also ran duplication services in a back

room) facilitated circumvention of censorship. As a consequence, a wide range of illegal cassettes—pirated, or not approved by the censors—also flooded the market. Flourishing piracy undermined artist profits, and limited investments of time or money. With such a broad and distributed production base, including the rise of the underground cassette economy, governments lost censorial control, tax revenues, and the ability to protect intellectual property rights (Khalafallah 1982).

Although the new product media model has provided far more market sensitivity than in the pre-cassette era (when virtually the entire music media system responded to state directives indirectly serving political agendas) it has also exhibited features quite different from the music industry of the West. Cassette (later CD) producers—nearly always privately held—have tended to be exceedingly risk-averse. Developing economies meant that prices have had to be kept low. With profit margins so narrow, production investment (in composition, lyrics, musicians, rehearsals, and recording) has necessarily been limited. Low levels of trust in business dealings has entailed artists' understandable insistence on being paid up front rather than receiving royalties computed according to sales (which tend to be drastically under-reported as they are linked to taxation and royalties; see below). Since artists are not co-investing in the production—the artist fee must come out of *expected* revenues—there have been powerful incentives for producers to minimize costs.

Risk-aversion has been exacerbated by lack of market information. Industry sales statistics are not publicly available (Hammond 2007, 177), concealed by producers to avoid taxation and payment of mechanical royalties. As a consequence of limited budgets and authoritarian state suspicion of sociological studies, market research remains extremely rudimentary (Amin 2008). Lack of information produces a conservative, uncreative system. The only reliable market feedback being their own sales, most producers tend merely to imitate the previous hit. Creative investment has been further stifled by high piracy rates (IFPI 2005), which drastically reduce a recorded product's effective shelf-life, at least from a copyright-owner's perspective.

These factors encourage dominant industry players to create inexpensive, catchy albums—typically showcasing a single hit song—aimed at producing a rapidly subsiding flare of sales, thus mitigating the negative consequences of the piracy that inevitably follows in the wake of any successful album. In such an environment, the industry has consistently preferred short songs featuring upbeat tempos, melodic-harmonic clichés, small ensembles, simple

repetitive colloquial texts, and visually attractive singers (depicted on cassette liners, later in music videos), over the longer, slower, audiocentric *tarab* hits prevailing into the early 1970s. Oriented primarily to the youth, such songs are quickly consumed (the metaphor of 'fast food' is oft-invoked (cf. Marcus 2007, 161)), and generally do not sustain extended listening (even by fans). In this way, producers seek to recoup their initial investment as quickly as possible, generating enough marginal profit to fund the next production (Frishkopf 2004c).

What has occurred is not simply a shift from aesthetics to commerce (as some critics would have it), but a transformation in the system's economic logic. In earlier days top composers and poets—such as Riyad al-Sunbati (1906–81) and Ahmed Rami (1892–1981)—labored to create and polish musical masterpieces for top singers, such as Umm Kulthum, a strategy which also brought financial rewards. Rehearsed to perfection by the best musicians, sometimes over a period of many months, this process generated recordings subsequently cherished for years, and steady sales. Even today SonoCairo sells upwards of 20,000 Umm Kulthum songs monthly, on cassette and CD (Castelo-Branco 1987, 37; Frishkopf 2004c).

By contrast, most post-1980 albums have been produced quickly and comparatively inexpensively through studio overdubbing and extensive cutting-and-pasting (literally so, in the era of digital audio) of formulaic melodies, *lawazim* (melodic fills), harmonic sequences, texts, and forms, designed to burst *(yitfar'a')* predictably onto the scene, and rapidly fade. Trendy Western, Caribbean, and Latin sounds and styles (Frishkopf 2003), from rock to reggae, and especially the popular music ensemble featuring guitar, bass, drums, and *org* (synthesizer—see Marcus 2007, 160; Rasmussen 1996) introduced to the Arab world through the same media channels, have become increasingly prominent. The youth audience found the new styles—called *shababi* ('youth') in Egypt (Marcus 2007, 160), *rai* ('opinion') in Algeria (Mazouzi 2002)—an exhilarating and refreshing change, while older listeners complained of declining standards and limited aesthetic range. Gradually a variety of such youth songs came to dominate each subregional soundscape (North African, Gulf, Egypt, Levant, Sudan) as inflected by local aesthetics, constituting the origins of pan-Arab popular music today.

Some of the new Westernized pop music was soon broadcast on radio and television. Conversely *tarab* songs and Qur'anic recitations by famous shaykhs,[15] well-known via radio and TV, were reissued on cassette—along with a much wider selection of reciters than broadcasts could accommodate,

and a broad range of Western music—pop, rock, jazz, classical—as well. But a media schizophrenia also ensued, with the rise of cassette celebrities deliberately unrecognized by 'official' state media, due to perceived ethical, aesthetic, or political deficiencies. Such was often the case for commercial cassette musics more rooted in local, marginal, or rural traditions.

In Egypt, for instance, commercial cassette recordings of *qisa*s (religious stories) or *dhikr* (Sufi music), religious genres that broadcast media authorities judged as not 'properly' Islamic (Frishkopf 2000, 2002a), along with rural folk genres (such as *sira*—see Reynolds 1995, 35), and youth-oriented *sha'bi* pop (see Grippo in this volume; Marcus 2007, 160), sold millions of copies, creating huge stars (such as Shaykh Yasin al-Tuhami—see al-Tuhami 1998; Frishkopf 2002b), who received scarcely any radio or television coverage (though their cassettes were generally approved by the censor). In some cases, cassette celebrities, such as Ahmed Adaweya, were actively excluded by the state media establishment as *habit* (vulgar) (Armbrust 1996, 180; Racy 1982, 401; Hammond 2007, 171; see also Abdel-Latif in this volume). As had happened earlier in the 'central domain' of *tarab*, emergence onto cassette also wrought significant social, economic, sonic, and textual changes to these musical traditions, for instance, enabling far greater accumulations of wealth and fame, attracting a different sort of performer, transforming performer image, emphasizing commercialism, adding studio polish, and adapting musical style to new configurations of audiences, listening practices, and contexts (for example, Reynolds 1995, 96ff). In both live performances and cassette recordings, professional Sufi singers of Egypt, for instance, began to insert melodies of *tarab* songs, well-known from radio broadcasts and cassettes, thereby signifying their musical sophistication, and addressing a new audience conditioned by music media.

Numerous Muslim preachers *(khutaba')* contributed to mediated music discourse with popular cassettes fulminating against singing, though when fulminations extended to the government (and many, such as the infamous Shaykh Kishk, inveighed against both), they became political *personae non grata* and their cassettes—ineligible for publication permits—circulated underground (Hirschkind 2006, 59–60; Kepel 2003, 178, 181).

While the economy of cassettes facilitated a wider array of products geared to market niches, production of imitative youth-oriented hits, the most consistently and broadly profitable domain for active singer-stars, was—at least until the recent decline of music cassettes ("Sharikat kasit ittarrat . . . " 2002; "'Uyun" 2002) and relative rise of religious ones—overwhelmingly

dominant. Yet, despite limited industry investment or creativity, listeners have been empowered by the 'cassette revolution.' Unlike the broadcast media and limited range of LPs, cassettes provide much greater listener control. A diverse musical soundscape arose, varying by social situation, region, and neighborhood, and audibly marking place, context, and taste as diverse cassette musics blared from shops, cafés, restaurants, and market stands. Such sounds could even constitute subtle political messaging (Frishkopf 2009). By contrast, until recently radio music has remained homogeneous.

The Arab world moved only slowly toward adoption of CDs in the 1990s, and in poorer countries such as Egypt optical media have never fared well in comparison to cheaper cassettes, for which a broad base of record/playback technology was already available; in 2007 CDs represented only 5 percent of sales in Egypt, compared to 40 percent in Lebanon (Hammond 2007, 177). Only with the spread of inexpensive computers equipped with optical drives did CDs become widespread, and these days one can purchase pirated MP3 compilations on busy street corners. But by this time digital distribution—satellite television, the Internet, mobile phones—had leapfrogged the CD with audio-visual content (much of it free), foreshadowing the decline of product music media in the West today. A shakeout of the cassette industry ensued; smaller firms closed or were acquired, resulting in a reconcentration of product media production in the private sector.[16]

Despite a briefer history, music on television has arguably produced a more profound social effect by absorbing and exploiting visual as well as auditory perception, ensuring more total sensory attention as well as developing the semiotic potential of the visual medium. In the Arab world these considerations are amplified by television's tremendous social importance, stemming from relatively low literacy ("The World Factbook—Field Listing: Literacy" 2010), the largest proportion of young people in the world (38 percent—see Seib 2005), and a growing social conservatism encouraging women to stay at home, where TV has become the principal conduit for information and entertainment.

Since the first Arab broadcasts in the mid 1950s (Amin 2001, 30), television has played an increasingly important role in disseminating and shaping Arab musical culture. This role has been supported by rapid change in both the technological and economic fields. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s the rates of television ownership, number of channels, and diversity of content all increased rapidly. TV has mediated various forms of "visual music" (see

Cestor in this volume), including musical films (see Abdel Aziz, Nassar in this volume), live concerts, studio performances, talk shows, and singing contests (see Meizel in this volume). Combined with the increasing importance of the private home as site for entertainment–consumption (worldwide, but particularly in the Arab-Muslim world), TV music has loomed in importance.

The TV music effect has recently exploded with the advent of satellite television (Sakr 2007b), and its omnipresent *fidiyuklib* ('video clip'—music video), mostly delivered via 24/7 music video channels. Indeed, the most startling developments in mediated music have followed in the wake of transnational satellite broadcasts starting in the early 1990s (Sakr 2001), particularly private-sector free-to-air channels. Any household, restaurant, or café equipped with a dish and decoder box can receive these channels without subscription; using local distribution feeds (common in densely populated areas), even costs of dish and decoder can be shared by adjacent households. Such channels have not been directly driven by state-sponsored political agendas, nor have they been subject to direct government censorship. As Hussein Amin, professor of media studies at the American University in Cairo (AUC) and chairman of the board of the Egyptian Radio and Television Union Space Committee, has remarked ". . . in the new world of television, censorship basically does not exist" (Forrester 2001).

Undoubtedly the direct, fine-grained censorship that characterized state broadcasting for so many years is much less feasible in the new era of private satellite TV. However satellite owners (primarily governments) can nevertheless implement indirect, coarse-grained censorship, by pressuring program producers ("Najla Takes Off Her Pants" 2006), denying satellite bandwidth (Arab Christian channels reportedly unable to obtain bandwidth on Arabsat or Nilesat have broadcast via European Hotbird), or dropping channels (Basma 2008; Campagne 2008). In Egypt, parliamentary calls to ban video clips would primarily affect terrestrial channels (El-Bakry 2004), however a new charter adopted by Arab information ministers on February 12, 2008 threatens to implement uniform principles for censoring satellite television directly (Campagne 2008; Kraidy 2008a). These moves toward censorship seem primarily designed to preclude political opposition, but once the door to satellite censorship has been opened, cultural censorship may follow. Furthermore, one rationale for the charter—evidently intended to preempt Islamist opposition by gathering support from social conservatives—is an implied crackdown on 'pornographic' video clips (Kraidy 2008a). Here is

starkly revealed the inherent contradiction between the state's political and economic interests, since Nilesat is also intended to be a profitable corporation. In fact one of the advantages privatization conferred upon states is the ability to profit (indirectly) from 'objectionable' musical content while keeping it at arm's length (often, controversial music videos disseminated via state-owned satellites are not broadcast on state-owned terrestrial TV; see El Kachab in this volume). But on the whole, while reports of censorship's death may be greatly exaggerated, the satellite era has undoubtedly liberalized the airwaves.

Today, music in the Arab world has arguably shifted from an auditory to a visual medium, what Walid El Khachab calls "video music" (see El Khachab in this volume). Assisted by electronic manipulations, a singer's visual style and physical attractiveness have become more important than his or her vocal capabilities. Linked to global media, star images are increasingly driven both by Westernized transnational fashion and by economic logic. Both forces point toward eroticization, particularly of the female body (as underscored by most of the chapters in this volume). But whereas in much of the world, street culture imitates media fashions (or vice versa), in the Arab world there is an apparently strange disjuncture between television and street, where constraints of poverty and religious conservatism render televised music images phantasmagoric—more 'alternative to' than either a 'model of' or a 'model for' (to paraphrase Clifford Geertz) public life (see El Khachab, Al-Barghouti in this volume). For women especially it is primarily in the domestic sphere where life imitates art, underscoring the reality of the media as modeling a domestic space (more on this below).

A new pan-Arabism?

The centrality of the mass media, driven primarily by capitalism in search of markets, in the development of 'imagined communities' along linguistic contours has been elucidated by Benedict Anderson (1983). Mass media capitalisms (Anderson's argument centers upon print capitalism) generate 'common knowledge' (that which everybody knows, and which everybody knows is common knowledge) (Chwe 2001) within their span. Extending Anderson's arguments, I suggest that mass mediated music is critical in moving beyond the shared *cognitive* content which is 'common knowledge.' Mass mediated music generates 'common *feeling*,' infusing nationalisms with an essential emotional elan (Frishkopf 2008a) undergirding formation of all imagined communities, a modern, secular substitute for that Durkheimian *collective*

effervescence so crucial to the socially constitutive rituals of face-to-face communities (Durkheim 2001, 162–63, 171).

When media span encompasses a linguistic-cultural region—in whole or in part—common knowledge and common feeling support the realization of that region as a self-conscious community, sometimes interpretable as 'nation.' While media are often deliberately manipulated for this purpose by states, the effect is arguably greater when such communities appear as an emergent phenomenon, that is, when the media effect is bottom-up, as is typically the case for free-market systems, rather than top-down, since the former type typically goes unrecognized by media consumers, who accept it as 'natural' rather than imposed.

The difference between pan-Arab broadcasts in the 1950s–1960s and those of the 1990s–2000s is thus highly significant. The earlier period promoted a top-down pan-Arabism using Egyptian state radio services, especially Sawt al-'Arab (Voice of the Arabs, founded in 1953), through unequivocally ideological broadcasts (Boyd 1993, 28). Depending on terrestrial transmission, these were also limited in span. By contrast, satellite broadcasts have triggered a bottom-up effect. Conveniently, the Arab world fits comfortably within a well-positioned geosynchronous satellite footprint (see Figure 3), such as the Arab League's Arabsat, or Egypt's Nilesat. Hundreds of such free-to-air channels are instantly available across the Arab world, offering a common media experience to millions. 1990s pan-Arab broadcasts are increasingly responding to market forces—even on government channels.

A new kind of pan-Arabism has undoubtedly resulted from this phenomenon, though it is premature to evaluate its extent or ramifications. As defined

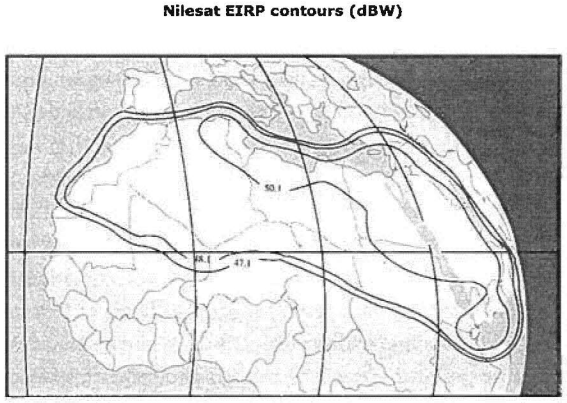

Figure 3. Nilesat's footprint encompasses the entire Arab world.

and promoted by Gamal Abdel Nasser, pan-Arabism was an explicit ideology, defined and promulgated from above, whose decline was marked by military losses in 1967, and the widespread adoption of capitalism in the 1970s. Jon Alterman, Naomi Sakr, and others have suggested that free-market, private sector satellite television, designed for a pan-Arab market and flashing instantaneously across the Arabic-speaking world, may induce a bottom-up, emergent pan-Arabism, drawing together an imagined community of Arabic speakers from Morocco to Arabia through a common media experience (Alterman 2005, 40), allowing Arabic speakers to discover a shared linguistic and cultural heritage, accelerated by the great quantity and speed of information transmitted via satellite television.

Transnational satellite broadcasts, offering diverse, sometimes critical, and even salacious programming, mainly outside the direct control of governments, now provide a free and appealing alternative to the long-established state media fare. Easy profits have driven an explosion of new channels and content, including dedicated Arab music TV channels (most prominently Rotana, Melody, and Mazzika). Besides representing music directly, satellite TV shapes music culture, by driving the socio-cultural and economic transformations within which all music (whether live or broadcast) must now fit. Within the satellite-media capitalism of the Arab world, music appears to play a key, as yet underrecognized, role in the generation of embodied, affective communality.

However, the social effects of satellite-disseminated mass media in the Arab world are complex, particularly in their musical aspect. Applications of Anderson's argument to apparently similar situations, across time, space, culture, and technology, must be inspected carefully. The dissemination of common knowledge throughout a linguistic community does not necessarily give rise to a sense of common identity, particularly when that community exhibits significant dialectical variation. Unified by a common literary language *(fusha)*, the Arab world is also linguistically divided by heterogeneous colloquial languages (sometimes mutually unintelligible), defining a hierarchy of linguistic regions both subdividing and criss-crossing nation states. Less clear, but equally important, are parallel *cultural* differences. Similar complexities of dialect and culture existed in Europe (for example, 'Germany' wasn't speaking a single German). But whereas print capitalism tended to fix and standardize languages (forging 'official' or 'literary' versions), the less formal secondary orality (Ong 2002) of audio-visual media disseminated by satellites is predisposed to express multiple dialects, especially in the Arab

world, with its relatively low literacy rates ("The World Factbook—Field Listing: Literacy" 2010) and high proportion of young people (Seib 2010). Furthermore, while classical Arabic was often sung in the past, colloquial Arabic dialects have enjoyed increasing musical popularity throughout the twentieth century, and enjoy overwhelming predominance today.

Therefore, the social effects of the mass-mediated sung Arabic language are rather ambiguous. Indeed dialect manipulation is an important marketing strategy in contemporary mediated pop music. Egyptian, Lebanese, and Gulf singers frequently adopt each others' dialects (sometimes even mixing them on a single album) to enhance commercial viability across subregions (for example, Lebanese Carole Samaha's recent album in a Gulf accent ("Carole Samaha: The New Face of Fashion" 2005)), though ultimately most pan-Arab popular singers tend to be categorized by subregion, as North African, Egyptian, Levantine, or Gulf, injecting common feeling into regional identities that did not formerly exist as such.

The social impact of mediated musical sound and image is more ambiguous still. Whereas a standard Arabic language (defined by a weighty literary heritage, and the Qur'anic revelation) continues to exist (and is still occasionally sung), Arab music always exhibits a range of subregional styles. Even in the pre-mediated period there was never a single 'classical Arab music.' Like language, Arab musical styles criss-cross national boundaries, and may correlate with class or age. Arab music (considered sonically, linguistically, or visually) therefore inevitably encodes multiple identities; Gulf music contrasts sharply with Lebanese or Moroccan, and each has its own music channels. The new pan-Arab broadcasts have also widened generation gaps that first appeared with the 'cassette revolution' (Usher 2007). Whereas Umm Kulthum and other stars of the mid-twentieth century were beloved by young and old alike, cassettes targeted and nurtured a youth *(shababi)* market, and this trend has continued with video clips. While the youth market dominates, particular programming and channels explicitly target an older demographic, for example, Rotana Tarab, presenting the hits of yesteryear. Televised images—via dance, dress, sets, or landscapes—likewise segment the market; for instance a number of Gulf channels feature traditional folk dances, and the more lascivious clips tend to alienate social conservatives, indirectly delineating an Islamic market.

As a result, mediated Arab music, comprising text, sound, and image, can be socially unifying, or divisive, even when broadcast throughout the region. Pan-Arab music markets do not necessarily serve to unify the Arab world as

a single imagined community, but equally induce a pan-Arab imagination of subcommunities that undermine Arab unity, by underlining subregional differences, generation gaps, religious differences, or national borders. Nationalism may return in force as an economic potential to be exploited by commerical media; this phenomenon is most evident on the singing competition reality shows (for example, SuperStar and Star Academy), associating contestants with countries and pitting them against each other, supported by SMS votes from compatriots back home (Kraidy 2006b; Lynch 2006; MacKenzie 2004; see Meizel and Cestor in this volume). New subregional imagined communities, sharing linguistic and cultural features as well as economic interests (for example, countries comprising the Gulf Cooperation Council, GCC), may emerge, overshadowing national boundaries, without encompassing the entire Arabic-speaking region (see Ulaby in this volume). Pan-Arab broadcasts do not simply unify the Arabic-speaking world by drawing together audiences through free-market processes; while defining a pan-Arab world via communications, they also provide a media space for the negotiation of identities, and differences, even for the formulation of opposition, within that world. Musical globalization (mainly, the inclusion of North American music in pan-Arab broadcasts) also produces ambiguous effects, further discussed below.

Figure 4: Sprouting from every Cairo rooftop: the ubiquitous satellite dish. (Photograph by Michael Frishkopf.)

One may also wonder to what extent pan-Arab channels even generate common knowledge or feeling, simply due to market fragmentation. While satellite broadcasts may be accessible across the Arab world, lack of market research makes it difficult to gauge the extent to which Arabic speakers are actually watching the same channels. Whereas the Arab world is integrated in theory by reception of common channels, it is simultaneously disintegrated in practice by the large number of such channels, increasingly targeting particular population segments. Thus the number of music channels has grown by leaps and bounds—while the four available free-to-air music channels in 2002 consolidated viewer experience, today there are dozens, many specializing in particular music styles and Arabic dialects (for example, Moroccan, Egyptian, Lebanese, Gulf, Sudanese). With market fragmentation, audiovisual musical experience is more divided as well.

Music channels and video clips

In the Arab world, as elsewhere, MTV-style 'video clips' (music videos), watched primarily on free-to-air, privately owned satellite-broadcast dedicated music channels, present a fusion of arts: filmmaking, music, choreography, dance, drama, design (see Abdel Aziz in this volume). Specializations in music production have proliferated apace: directors, cinematographers, and scriptwriters are as important as composers, arrangers, and lyricists. Variable features (dress, folklore, setting, humor, drama, dance, melody, instrumentation, rhythm) may target a particular subregion, age group, or social class. Other features are pan-Arab, or even global, due to common culture, marketing forces, technological resources, and media globalization. Because they are broadcast transnationally, music channel content is not directly regulated by governments, but shaped instead by technology and perceived audience preferences.

The visual dimension of television has become highly appealing, particularly as Arab music TV began to feature increasingly sophisticated, risqué images, based on Western models. As in the West, erotically portrayed female Arab bodies are ubiquitous. But the Arab world, with its stringent standards for public morality and rising religiosity (and sanctimony), has consumed such videos with fiercer debate (see Kubala, Al-Barghouti in this volume). The degree of female eroticism also indexes intra-Arab cultural differences (for example, Lebanon's social liberality versus Gulf conservativism), producing media system synergies (for example, capital from the latter financing production in the former; see Abdel Fattah, Cestor in this

volume). Public debates over morality are crucial to video clip production, because private satellite channel standards are driven by marketing factors (what the audience wants, or will tolerate; see "Najla Takes Off Her Pants" 2006) more than law.

The emergence, over the past ten years, of free satellite music TV in parallel with mobile phone and the Internet has enabled significant synergies to develop among these media. Music production and broadcast costs are borne by advertising and mobile phone revenues. Satellite-delivered 'interactive television' enables viewer participation, via partnerships with mobile phone providers' SMS services. Messaging appears on-screen, or is used to vote in music contests, request clips, or download ringtones. SMS revenues, divided between channel and mobile phone company, cover the costs of many dedicated music clip channels. The synergy between telecom and broadcasting extends to on-screen advertising for mobile phone providers, and mobile phone company sponsorships of live concerts. (See Battah 2008; Khan 2005, 145–46, 263; Kraidy 2008b, 97; Kubala, Grippo, Abdel Aziz, Armbrust in this volume).

Meanwhile, weakening economies throughout much of the Arab world, combined with the availability of free content on TV or the Internet, piracy, and a preference for the visual, has crushed the market for traditional audio product media. Gradually, cassette sales dropped, while in much of the Arab world CDs (and their associated playback devices) were always too expensive for the general populace to afford. By the early 2000s the cassette market was in steep decline, at least for mainstream mass popular music ("Sharikat kasit ittarrat . . . " 2002; "Tawzi' 'al-intirnit' yuhaddid ashab sharikat al-kasit" 2002; "'Uyun" 2002). However, certain niche markets—especially for Islamic sermons (Hirschkind, 2006), Qur'anic recitation (Frishkopf 2009; Nelson 2001), Sufi music (Frishkopf 2002a), and *sha'bi* pop; see Abdel-Latif, Grippo in this volume)—insufficiently served by broadcast media, have managed to thrive nevertheless.

Advertising, self-advertising, and exhibitionism

An advertisement is a symbol in two parts: the first gathers attention; the second redirects it to an object or service for sale. Music and sex are crucial attention-gatherers in most televised advertising today. Video clips—featuring both—are always advertisements, instances of an interstitial category ('advertainment') blurring advertising and entertainment. Clips can be used to sell anything at all as a means of attention gathering, by *sequential* juxtaposition to the commercial proper. *Simultaneous* juxtaposition includes

product placement within the clip, and explicitly commercial clips, featuring product endorsements of singing stars (for example, Amr Diab's advertisements for PepsiCo), often singing songs simultaneously sold as independent musical products (cf. Marcus 2007, 165; see also Cestor, Abdel Aziz, Kubala, Nassar, Grippo in this volume).[17]

More importantly, clips advertise their own content, presenting telephone numbers and codes used to download song media, and pointing to product media as well. Besides every clip's implicit 'buy me' message, product media are also advertised sequentially, via explicit commercials on the same channels. Clips also promote singer–stars directly, along with their other media productions, for instance films in which they play a starring role (and from which video clips are often extracted), or live events. As Hany Darwish observes (in this volume) about Egyptian star Ruby: "In her clip, instead of advertising a product, Ruby herself becomes the product being advertised."[18]

With declining sales, product media, too, have become promotional tools, self-advertisements. Like clips, their importance lies more in their ability to generate symbolic capital (fame) than economic capital (Rizk 2009). Large, highly capitalized, horizontally integrated firms, such as Rotana, can afford to develop exclusive contracts with an entire stable of top singers, whom they promote through their own satellite channels, radio stations, websites, and print media. Resulting symbolic capital is exchanged for cash via live performances at weddings or ticketed events, endorsements, advertisements, or added value in other contexts.

Thus performers and their production companies eagerly produce video clips and provide them to music channels free of charge (Battah 2008), or even pay for broadcast dissemination (Sakr 2007b, 123). With vast distribution, video clips promote singers' careers—and management companies profit from them. Many of these statements may apply worldwide, but take on added significance in a region where the economy and piracy have drastically reduced the profitability of product media.

But music channels are highly profitable, particularly those offering no programming beyond broadcast videos and SMS messages, since aside from an essential layer of human SMS filtration (typically outsourced), channel services can be almost entirely automated, reducing staff to technical operators, yet generating a reported $1 million per channel per month in SMS fees alone, split between channel and mobile phone company. According to Nilesat, approximately sixty music/SMS channels emerged between September 2005 and March 2008 (Battah 2008).

With the gradual victory of capitalist logic over traditional values, explicit eroticism has become an established principle in advertising of all forms, linking the economy to the most reliable of human drives (see Armbrust in this volume). Thus if video clips are auto-adverts, a sexual component is always expected, within audience tolerance.[19] In search of maximal profits, advertisers (music video producers in particular) are continually probing its limits, and thus are guaranteed to provoke public discourse (some of which is captured in this book), particularly in the Arab–Islamic world, with its strong patriarchy and concern for public virtue. Clip eroticism is primarily a visual phenomenon, of bodies and movements, evoking a long history of belly dance in Arab film, yet now incorporating also a more angular, aggressive Western kinesic style (see Darwish in this volume). Unlike Western video clips, with their explicit lyrics, the prevailing light romance of Arab song texts is completely at odds with the erotic video clip imagery they accompany (this phenomenon is particularly clear in Ruby's song "Leh biydari kida"; see Darwish, El Khachab, Elmessiri in this volume), perhaps because verbal limits are more readily defined and enforced than visual ones. As a result music's impact hinges increasingly on its visual aspect; as composer Mounir Al Wassimi states in this volume, "if you close your eyes while hearing a televised song today, you may not feel anything at all."

Criticism of music videos is widespread, but also heterogeneous, critics representing radically different socio-political perspectives, as this volume attests. Clips, and the channels that carry them, have been under heavy fire from social and religious conservatives for illicit public sensuality; from feminist critics, for objectification and commodification of the female body; from nationalist and anti-globalization critics, for cultural imperialism; and from music critics, nostalgic for a romantic audio past, closer to the *tarab* aesthetic, which left more to the imagination (see Kubala, Nassar, Elmessiri, Al Wassimi, Darwish, Abdel Fattah in this volume). Others, including (conveniently) music industry representatives, but also some journalists and academics, uphold video clips as a positive sign of a new liberalism and freedom, even as a secular-liberal antidote to political Islam (Frishkopf 2004a; Khalaf and Wallis 2006; see also Abdel Fattah, Armbrust in this volume). Such critiques resemble those heard in the West. But the socio-political situation in the Arab world is entirely different. Against a backdrop of social conservatism, political repression, and cultural imperialism, eroticism is semantically polarized, carrying strong messages of freedom . . . or of depravity.

Today's video-clip economy is both broad and deep in the Arab world, penetrating public and private spaces via increasingly ubiquitous satellite reception. Cafés that had once displaced live music with phonographs and radio now suspend televisions from ceilings. Predominantly male patrons crane their necks to watch attractive, semi-nude dancing females, rather than look at each another (as they had done when radio or phonograph music provided a sonic backdrop), while fully veiled women pass by in the street. Public standards vary by region, but in Egypt today nearly all women veil in public, *a fortiori* in the more conservative Gulf states, and increasingly among Arab Muslims everywhere. While in Beirut video clip fashion may mirror or model street fashion (as in the West), in most other Arab societies a video clip appears more as an alternative media reality, presenting an escapist, eroticized opulence (see El Khachab, Al-Barghouti in this volume). Public Arab society has thus been filled with ironic contrasts of concealment absent in the West, expressing and shaping the meanings of clips, as well as posing interpretive paradoxes for the observer.

Eroticism and implicit rules against pollution

The central such paradox—how can such a public musical eroticism thrive in conservative societies?—may be superficially understood as a clash of powerful social systems (capitalism versus Islam, global versus local, or 'West' versus 'East'), or, more insightfully, as a swirling manifestation of complex, evolving social dynamics. But how are these clashes and swirls sustained?

Clips are not the only source of paradox. The Arab news media typically discourage female veiling, as a matter of ideological policy as well as profit. Egyptian state television channels have forbidden veiling of female announcers, a means of opposing Islamist currents, though these channels are more conservative with video clips than their private-sector counterparts (see Kubala, El Khachab in this volume). Meanwhile, veiled announcers appear, in Egypt, on *private* sector channels, responding to a market, or expressing other ideologies.

But the ironic contrast between street and media life is more pronounced in music. Despite conservative opposition to sexy clips, they are widely consumed—if not publicly imitated—by the Arab public. There are ironic contrasts between successive channels, one featuring 24/7 music videos with (that ever-titillating cliché) 'scantily clad dancers' in fantastically exotic, luxurious settings (see Al-Barghouti in this volume); the next Islamic, with veiled (or, better, no) women, perhaps even a bearded preacher denouncing

music videos altogether. Sometimes contrastive channels, produced according to a market-segment logic, even form part of the same media empire (for example, Rotana's music, cinema, and Islamic channels[20]).

Not all clips flaunt erotic females, however. Beside a limited number of nationalist, political, or family-values clips are the new 'Islamic video clips,' *al-fann al-hadif* ('art with a purpose') (Kubala 2005), in which sexy female bodies (or even voices) are entirely absent: an Islamic alternative to the Western music video that is nevertheless "like Western pop music, an extremely useful tool for marketing and selling products" (Pond 2006; see also Armbrust and Kubala in this volume). Islamic video clips have proliferated on Islamic channels (themselves proliferating as fast as music channels; see Basma 2008) and even specialized Islamic music channels, such as 4shabab;[21] the biggest star is the British Sami Yusuf, who sings in Arabic as well as English and other languages. Still, as Pond notes, Islamic clips and channels participate in the same techno-economic music system that produces secular pop videos, differing primarily in content. Furthermore, Islamic videos are not bereft of physical beauty—but here it is male beauty, attracting female fans—and once again contrast sharply with unmediated reality, as well as with other media spaces. Yet, a modest *veiled* woman who appeared recently in an unusually realistic music video clip[22]—devoid of anyone 'scantily clad'—stirred more controversy than if she'd been undressed! (see Kubala 2005). One might equally cite the stark contrast between Cairo's lingerie-laden shop windows ("flourishing with panties," as Egyptian poet Iman Mersal has it (2008, 25)) and the street; or the street and the interior of the home. So many paradoxes to unravel!

In all these cases, however, one observes that ironic contrasts appear only *across media boundaries*; in other words the rules of concealment are consistent within each media space. The gyrating dancer does not intrude on the bearded shaykh, nor he on her; they occupy separate but equal domains. Likewise, the clip is utterly unlike real life; it is unmistakably *other*. Here is an unwritten meta-code of symbolic purity, mediating oppositional discursive codes of religion ("thou shalt not . . . ") and capitalism (freedoms of profit and pleasure), by defining disjoint, bounded categories (multiple channels, the street, the home) in each of which different 'codes' apply, with the caveat that such categories *must not overlap*, thus avoiding the dangers of pollution (Douglas 2005). By means of such symbolic compartmentalization is provided a measure of psychic, hence social, stability; indeed, each code ironically *supports* its opposite as a unifying nemesis. The meta-code

protects incompatible categories by forbidding their overlap (which is why the appearance of a veiled woman in a realistic video clip may have caused such a stir). These ironies of contrast can be further resolved on at least two levels: economy, and social space.

From the perspective of economy, contrasting rules for female representations enable highly profitable musical practices to thrive in separate domains, despite Islamic discourses deeply critical of music, *a fortiori* public female singers and dancers (Gribetz 1991; Nelson 2001, 32–51; Shiloah 1997). The media system depends on the maintenance of multiple media worlds, internally consonant, apparently mutually antagonistic, yet ultimately symbiotic. The perception of each such world is cognitively engulfing, stirring a visceral sense of its own rightness, while obliterating the felt truth of any other. Critical faculties thereby disabled, the viewer merely succumbs to the sensory present. The apparent clash of such worlds masks their underlying economic interdependence. While religion and capitalism appear contradictory—the pursuit of profit versus higher principles—their media worlds are mutually reinforcing. Extreme veiling enhances the economic value of the female body, while the unveiled body viscerally legitimizes the social–spiritual value of 'moral virtue.' The apparent visible contradiction between these worlds thus conceals an unacknowledged synergy, by which each world maintains its boundaries (see Al-Barghouti in this volume). A dynamic feedback cycle between the two extremes once again instantiates Bateson's schismogenesis, transposed to the media sphere.

But music videos also penetrate domestic spaces, where they influence a large female audience. Perhaps the cooperative antagonism of apparently contradictory media worlds itself masks their *resolution* in the lived domestic sphere, where life and 'art' are closer than they appear in the street. Conservative Muslim practice only objects to expressions of femininity and sexuality outside of their 'proper' marital boundaries (as interpreted in the *Shari'a*, Islamic law). Thus the contradiction of fully veiled women gazing through "shop windows flourishing with panties" (sometimes inspired by video clip styles!) is only apparent, if such windows are regarded as an economically necessary extrusion of a domestic space into a public one.

Likewise, the apparent contradiction between video clip behaviors and public norms hinges on the assumption that TV is a public medium. However, as television's domestic installed base expanded rapidly from the 1980s onward, penetrating nearly every Arab home, and as satellite receivers have become nearly as ubiquitous, Arab TV has become domesticated as well, all

the more so with the rise of Islamic norms inhibiting public entertainments and female freedom outside the home. While televisions installed in cafés and restaurants broadcast a public semi-nudity to a predominantly male audience, contravening Islamic norms, most TV consumption now takes place in a private domestic space, where the audience is predominantly female. There, in the presence only of close male relations (spouse or *maharim*, those prohibited for marriage) and other females (and sometimes in female-only clubs or even shopping malls), Muslim girls may remove their veils, dress in the fashions of video clips—and dance to their music. Here, females can indeed imitate their favorite singing star, as a domestic intimate, with the virtual reality of video clips coming to life on ever-larger living room screens.

The 'domestication' of televised stars is enhanced by mediated discourse—on TV, radio, in magazines and newspapers—in which music celebrities share intimate details of their lives, rendering the stars as familiar as close friends (see Armbrust in this volume). The ironic intimacy of female media stars, whose private lives are widely exposed, means that these performers—unseeing, but unveiled—come to be accepted as virtual family members, in a domestic space where unveiling and dancing is more acceptable.

The spatial separation of home and street thus provides yet another instance of the 'purity' principle: disjoint, bounded spaces, characterized by contrastive social rules. Indeed the contradiction can be further interpreted in the recognition of the home as a one-way public space, where the entire world is revealed to female inhabitants, as if through a media *mashrabiya*.[23] Formerly known as the *haramlik*, this is a space of one-way visual flow: insiders see out, but no one sees in (see Abdel Fattah in this volume). While unidirectional perception is everywhere a property of broadcast media, in the Arab world, where many women remain at home, it is a particularly significant one. Televised mediation enables even male stars to enter respectably into the home, seen but unseeing, blinded by TV's one-way transmission (just as—in Arab medieval times—blind male musicians were favored in female performance contexts (Touma 1996)). Perhaps the television itself has become a metaphoric veil, its screen analogous to the *sitara* behind which musicians performed in Abbasid times (and in more conservative Arab settings today) (Farag 1976, 204).

Sharper contradictions arise when the female media star is considered as a public figure, broadcast (as she also is) into the public space of the street, violating norms of a different social domain. Here the female singer–dancer invokes another social category—not the intimate friend of the *haramlik*, but

the religiously disreputable persona of female singer or dancer: *qayna, jariya* (Shiloah 1995), *'alma, ghawazi* (Lane 1836), or *raqqasa* (Nieuwkerk 2006), exuding a seductive feminity in total contrast to that of the demure, veiled, virtuous woman (whom she may also entertain), this contrast (in dress, manner, genealogy) serving to ensure the symbolic purity of each category. Threatening, but also titillating and economically valuable, is this performer's implicit challenge to the categorical separation of public and domestic space, simultaneously performing, as she does, in both. Indeed, mediated music stars—public by definition, domesticated by practice—can be distinguished according to the ways in which they mix elements of domestic innocence and public courtesan, for the selected proportions of this mixture are tantamount to a strategy for commercial success.

Whereas the Lebanese singing star Nancy Ajram emphasizes her domestic innocence, with special appeal to younger girls, the Egyptian star Ruby is closer to the public *qayna-raqqasa* figure, appealing to men (and generating considerably more controversy as a result (Comer 2005)). In either case, a categorically threatening admixture of innocence and courtesan, enabled by the sophisticated illusions of media technology, provides a simulated voyeuristic experience of 'ordinary girls singing and dancing,' far more titillating than the gyrations of professional dancers, categorized as such. This fact perhaps helps explain why a professional, such as Lucy, could never compete with a Ruby in the video clip business, the former's far greater dancing talent (and no matter how seductively applied, as in her controversial 2004 clip "Ya imghayyir hali") only serving to classify her all too unambiguously far from the domestic sphere, as observed by Elmessiri in this volume (see also El Khachab, Armbrust, Cestor, Darwish, Kubala, Abdel Fattah, Al-Barghouti in this volume.)

The new synchronousness

With satellites came the resurgence of synchronousness: the communicative condition of distributing and consuming media in lockstep. Before the 1970s, most mediated music was consumed via a few state-owned, free, synchronous broadcast channels (radio, TV), enforcing socio-temporal alignment of listening experiences, as well as state-determined standards of aesthetic quality and moral decency. Asynchronous music media—decoupling distribution and consumption—were limited to phonograms, and relatively less influential, due to cost. Individual media choice was therefore limited, for the most part, to selecting a channel or station from among few options. With

the 'cassette revolution' came a dramatic rise in individual choice, along with widespread asynchronousness.

But choice and asynchronousness could also be decoupled. With the 1990s advent of Arabic channels broadcast, today, from five geosynchronous satellites operated by two Arab satellite organizations—Arabsat (founded in 1976 by the Arab League) with three, and Nilesat (established by Egypt in 1998 as a publicly traded corporation) with two—plus additional channels emanating from European satellites (for example, Hotbird), Arab households can now receive well over seven hundred free-to-air television channels, most of them produced by a market-sensitive private sector, along with dozens of satellite radio channels (Amin 2000; Sakr 2007b; Sakr 2001; Sakr 1999; Hafez 2008).

In Egypt, terrestrial audio has diversified and expanded as well, with the 2003 licensing of two privately managed, privately held commercial stations, Nugum FM (stars FM) and Nile FM, the first such licenses to be issued in sixty-nine years (Sabra 2003; Grippo in this volume). Playing the latest popular hits in search of audience, a government music station (Iza'at al-Aghani, 'Song Radio'), forced to compete, gradually shifted from 'the classics' to similar popular music fare. The new radio content is less determined by censors or taste-arbiters, more driven by commercial considerations. In the mid-1990s Egyptian taxis contained stacks of dusty cassettes, frequently jamming in dusty cassette players. By 2004, cassettes, players, and dust had largely disappeared, as most taxi drivers tuned to the new commercial radio, and participated in a more unified media experience.

However there is a class and religious dimension to the synchronous/asynchronous distinction. First, an active cassette culture has persisted among lower classes, and certain groups of devout Muslims. These include drivers of microbuses—transportation for the masses—whose sonic fare tends to center on *sha'bi* music and taped Islamic sermons not available on synchronous channels (indeed many of these Islamist sermons would never clear the censor).

Second, asynchronousness has developed via the Internet, which has dramatically proliferated among middle and upper classes (and increasingly among lower classes as well) since the late 1990s.[24] But whereas in the West the Internet has enabled a vast and varied indie music scene via Myspace and other 'web 2.0' sites, in the Arab world most online content replicates synchronous channels. A large number of Arab music websites (often linked to channels or production houses) provide MP3s, ringtones, and videos, and Arab youth (as elsewhere) are adept at filesharing as well. Over the past

decade or two, DJs have replaced cover bands (themselves having replaced traditional unmediated music culture only a few decades earlier) at many lower- to middle-class weddings, due to lower cost, and a shift of authenticity (following music media commodification) from 'live performance' to 'original recording.' Only economic elites can afford to hire media stars to perform live, while traditional unmediated ('folk') performers have become increasingly marginalized.[25] But today lower classes in Egypt further economize by loading up a hard drive with downloaded songs, renting a sound system, and deejaying themselves. As was formerly the case for music delivered on cassette or CD, lack of IPR enforcement has contributed to widespread Internet piracy, though many websites formerly distributing illegal free content (for example, mazika.com) have recently begun to comply with copyright laws.

On the whole, however, music consumption has now returned from asynchronous product media back toward synchronous broadcast. Yet the new synchronousness is quite different from that of the old terrestrial radio and TV, in part because the music system has assumed a radically different topology.

New production-consumption topologies

With the advent of satellite television and globalization of the entertainment industry, the topology of the music media system has been transformed. Once governments relinquished full control of music media, and further with the liberalization of many Arab economies, new transnational connections began to link sites across the Arab world in order to optimize financing, recording, and distribution.

Thus whereas up until the 1990s Cairo was the undisputed music and media production center of the Arab world (inducing broad comprehension of the Egyptian dialect), over the past decade or so a networked transnational model has emerged, centered on Saudi Arabian financing and control (Cochrane 2007), production and distribution in the Gulf (especially Dubai), Beirut, and Cairo, and musical talent from everywhere. Egypt, despite its musical riches, is—relatively speaking—materially and technologically poor. While undoubtedly remaining important, Cairo has lost its former political and cultural centrality (see Kubala and Grippo in this volume; Hammond 2007, 13). Lebanon, small but well-educated, well-connected (particularly via an enormous global diaspora), and culturally liberal, has been supplying new musical stars at a rate all out of proportion to its tiny population (see Cestor in this volume). Furthermore Westernized Beirut, ultramodern Dubai, and oil-rich Saudi Arabia are far better connected to the global media economy than Cairo.

There has also been a shift in the topology of consumption. Though most satellite broadcasts are free, advertising and SMS messaging drive content. Egypt provides a large consumer population, but much greater purchasing power is available in the Gulf; most music SMS messages originate in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait (Battah 2008). A consumer sector of growing importance are the populous, prosperous Arab diasporas of Europe, North America, South America, and Australia, many of whom pay high fees to receive retransmitted satellite content via subscription services as a means of staying in touch with the Arab world.

Meanwhile, North Africa, though both receiving and sending pan-Arab broadcasts, is peripheral to pan-Arab music. While North Africans typically know (and may enjoy) the latest Arab Middle Eastern hits just as well as Middle Eastern Arabs, music emanating from North Africa is generally not appreciated in the Arab Middle East due to its unfamiliar dialects and styles.[26] North African singers—such as Warda or Samira Said—have typically relocated to Cairo and sung in Egyptian dialect in order to achieve pan-Arab celebrity. Musically the Arab *Maghrib* is in many ways more closely linked to urban France—through its diaspora, post-colonial connections, and use of French—than to the *Mashriq*.[27] Moroccans, in particular, frequently feel themselves to constitute a distinctive cultural region, more connected, along a north–south axis, to Europe and West Africa, often declaring themselves African but not Middle Eastern. One young Moroccan believes that musical tastes trace "cracks in the pan-Arabic imagery":

> Arabic music is advertised as the music of our brothers and of a dreamed great Arab nation, but when you compare it to Western music, many Moroccans find Arabic music antiquated, full of clichés and, musically speaking, poor. Other Moroccans just don't feel that they are Arab, the majority being of mixed Arab, Berber, and African origins. So they adopt occidental lifestyles more easily and, accordingly, music tastes. (Al-Zubaidi 2006)

The new topology also features integration with global media networks, diffusing non-Arab audio-visual styles (mostly Western, but occasionally from elsewhere too)[28] and productions more widely in the Arab world than ever before. All contemporary Arab pop exhibits strong Western stylistic influence, but several Arab-owned music video channels (such as Melody Hits), present Western video clips themselves, leading to an ambiguous pan-Arab 'common knowledge/feeling' effect: if all Arab speakers watch and hear the American rapper Baby Bash (currently disseminated on Melody), does this shared media experience reinforce pan-Arabism, or destroy it?

Liberal or conservative?

Undoubtedly the recent liberalized phase of transnational, privatized music media offers many more products than were available in the days of public sector control. However product diversity is not tantamount to anyone's notion of quality, or even improved market satisfaction. More crucially, though productions and stars are unprecedentedly numerous, stylistic diversity is quite limited: music products are exceedingly homogeneous.

Though scientific market research is lacking, countless conversations with Arabs suggest that most adults are not pleased with the range or quality of music productions emanating from the private music sector today—regarding them as trite, uncreative, unmusical, or indecent. There are many songs and stars, people say, but most are crass imitations of one another: they're all singing the same thing. Audiences have little choice, except to listen to older recordings (here Rotana Tarab provides a valuable service). "There are no great singers today," or "what happened to *tarab*?" are commonly voiced complaints. Others appreciate the musical gifts of particular young Arab pop artists (Egyptian musicians frequently commend Sherine Abdel Wahhab and Nancy Ajram as truly talented vocalists), while decrying a music industry that forces them to sing bland pop melodies and flaunt their visual appeal, underutilizing their musical talents and negating the faculty of imagination so critical to earlier romantic song (see Nassar, Elmessiri, Al Wassimi, Darwish in this volume).

Even if the Arab music industry—like music industries elsewhere—centers on profit more than art, why should its productions stir so much discontent? Neoliberalism suggests that free markets should drive the private sector to optimize consumer satisfaction, however lowbrow. Some new media advocates view privatized media in positively Pollyannaish terms. As AUC's Professor Hussein Amin told me, in praise of the liberalized media sector: "the government has to stop forcing people to listen to Umm Kulthum and Qur'an and give them what they want" (Frishkopf 2004a). But while it's quite possible that many people don't want to listen to Umm Kulthum or Qur'an (though many do!), it is illusory for even a neoliberal to conclude that the Arab music system will ultimately give people 'what they want' under the pressure of free market forces, because it's not a liberal system.

I have already discussed many of the factors impeding free market dynamics in music production—piracy, lack of market research, risk aversion, and weak economies. In addition, very few music production companies—even large ones—are publicly traded, precluding shareholder backpressure. Furthermore, most Arab media companies can be established only with the patronage and collusion of political power, whose interests bear heavily on media productions, transcending market pressures (Fandy 2005; Sakr 2007b; Zayani 2004; see Al Wassimi in this volume). Indeed, Mamoun Fandy has argued that the private/public distinction is of limited value in the Arab world (Fandy 2007).

As a result, oligopoly prevails: the four largest music companies control over 80 percent of the market today (Rizk 2009, 343). Powerfully positioned, horizontally and vertically integrated (including production, video clip channels, cassette/CD distribution, radio stations, cinema, endorsements, advertising, live concerts, websites, even music magazines), closely linked to the region's mobile phone companies, and benefiting from resulting synergies, these companies have deep pockets, plenty of star-creation power, and little tolerance for non-exclusive contracts (see Turki 2008).

Saudi-based Rotana—holding vast resources far outstripping those of the competition combined—is the most powerful player of all (Khan 2005, 260–65; Rizk 2009, 345–46). Fueled by massive oil wealth, Rotana is overwhelmingly dominant, with six channels, a record company, a magazine, and roster of top stars (Usher 2007). Specializing at first in Gulf singers, Rotana today has gathered stars from across the Arab world (including 80 percent of Lebanon's Arab repertoire (Harabi 2009, 13))—illustrating a more general Saudi media dominance (Cochrane 2007). Though Rotana is listed on the Saudi stock exchange, its principal is a member of the royal family, and control rests firmly in his hands.

Meanwhile, the Arab 'independent,' 'alternative,' or 'underground' scene, though undoubtedly expanding, is still exceedingly marginal as compared to its Western counterpart, and limited primarily to a narrow elite.[29] While the Web facilitates dissemination of musical alternatives, Internet access is far from universal, and alternative music (particularly heavy metal) is sometimes repressed—for purported moral violations—when politically expedient (Gordon 2008; LeVine 2008; Rizk 2009, 347–48; Tarbush 2007). Amateur music-making has dwindled, due to the power of consumer media, negative attitudes perpetrated by Islam, and a shrinking middle class. For the most part, predictable industry-created stars prevail.

Certainly the erotic images of mediated music are 'liberal' by the standards of Arab society. Some also see liberalism in the audience empowerment enabled by 'interactive television,' allowing viewer SMS feedback in selection of music videos or voting in music competitions, concluding that satellite TV has become the Arab world's "virtual Democracy Wall" (Friedman 2003). However, such voting is 'democracy-lite,' with most votes cast chauvinistically (sometimes with state subsidies!) according to identity-based coalitions (Lynch 2006; see also Meizel in this volume); in so many ways "voting for a superstar is not the same as voting for an election" (Usher 2007; see also Battah 2008). Indeed, one might easily argue the opposite: that interactive television delays real democracy with consumerist illusions of citizen-empowerment that must first be dispelled.

Music's financiers and neo-liberal commentators conveniently interpret lucrative liberalism as an expression of social freedom and progress. Significantly, two of the region's wealthiest and most powerful communications media tycoons, Naguib Sawiris (Egyptian) and Prince Alwaleed bin Talal (Saudi)—both with close connections to ruling regimes—have independently justified their business ventures as a tool for promoting social liberalism in the face of religious extremism (Sakr 2007b, 123).

Structurally, however, the underlying music system is profoundly conservative, cautious, repetitive; afraid of new musical directions outside the aesthetic status quo, for the most part even unable to promote artists carrying forward the aesthetics and repertoires of the *turath*, that much-vaunted repository of the Arab musical heritage. Under such conditions, there can never be another Umm Kulthum, indeed . . . .

The study of the general relation between music and media systems is complex. Such a study includes, centrally, the study of their *intersection*—mediated music, and its multifarious social ramifications. But such a study must also extend far beyond that intersection to encompass the broader bilateral *interactions* between two these two vast, overlapping social systems, considered in all their cultural, political economic, and technological intricacy.

These interactions include a tremendous range of phenomena. On the one hand are the general effects of the media (beyond their sonic manifestations) on music as sound, practice, and discourse: the socio-economic processes of media system uptake; resulting transformations to musical context, style, form, genre, timbre, modality, rhythm, poetry, aesthetics, ethics, performance practice, and criticism; transmutations to creative roles, gender roles, celebrity, norms of

behavior and image, oral traditions, processes of transmission, social networks of artists and listeners; changes to the music economy, the forces and relations of music production, financial flows and concentrations, integrations and synergies, patronage, professionalism, distribution, consumption, and articulations with the global media system; shifts in listening roles and practices, meanings, and experiences; the list is endless.

On the other hand, the relation also entails consideration of the ways in which the music system (mediated or not) has shaped—even driven—the media system and its associated social practices, by embedding music culture within that system (particularly in advertising and cinema) thereby "enticing audiences into unfamiliar terrain" (Armbrust 2002, 233–34), by facilitating intermedia synergies including transfers of celebrity capital, or simply by ensuring profitability, for music channels are among the most lucrative satellite broadcasts (Sakr 2007b, 121).

Beyond the two systems, mediated music powerfully expresses and influences social and material transformation, a key (if often unrecognized) component of formative social practice. While music as a social force—the power of music to shape social relations—is infrequently acknowledged in local discourse, it is demonstrated in practice, all the more powerful for being unrecognized, for "flying under the radar of discourse" (Frishkopf 2009). This much is true everywhere.

But in the Arab world there are special factors modulating (and modulated by) this power: a diversity of musical styles and languages (including multiple Arabic dialects); the recency and complexity of 'Arab identity' (including tensions with religious, national, subregional, and minority ethnic identities—Bedouin, Kurd, Berber, Armenian, Greek, Jew, Filipino, Nubian, South Asian); the lingering effects of divisive colonialism and variable social and linguistic connections to the West; the multileveled role of music (*turath*, rural, or contemporary) in formulating multiple collectivities; a persistent and pervasive patriarchy (Joseph 1996); the quick pace of technological progress (funded by sudden oil wealth); rapid musical change and Westernization clashing with an Arab musical heritage that is symbolically cherished but not always appreciated; a longstanding (and recently intensifying) Islamic opposition to music (Shiloah 1997, Handley 2009); the largest proportion of young people in the world (Seib 2005, 604); relatively low literacy (especially among women); regional political turbulence and instability; widespread authoritarianism (Economist Intelligence Unit 2008); enormous disparities in wealth across class and region; a far-flung and influential diaspora beyond the borders of the Arab League; and a high level of racism and xenophobia directed against persons of Arab descent, particularly in the aftermath of 9/11.

Thus grappling with music and media in the Arab world is a particularly challenging task. The challenge is not only to gather data over such a large and diverse geo-cultural region (and good data tends to be scarce, well-guarded, or both), but also to intepret that data within multiple fields (social, cultural, religious, economic, political), in a rapidly changing environment. One might argue that the variety of the 'Arab world' and the considerable politics underlying its conception renders it unsuitably arbitrary as a research domain, except that it has been called into existence—more than ever before—by the media themselves, and by music media in particular.

Nevertheless a number of distinguished scholars of Arab music and culture have successfully taken up the challenge, starting from the earliest media period, the early Arab record industry (Lagrange 1994, 133–214; Racy 1976, 1977, 1978). Much centers on Egypt: Salwa El-Shawan's detailed histories of *al-musiqa al-'arabiya*, in its multiple relations with the media (1980, 1981) and her subsequent study of Egypt's cassette industry (Castelo-Branco 1987); Kristina Nelson's seminal study of Qur'anic recitation (including its mediated forms) (2001); Virginia Danielson's magisterial account of Umm Kulthum's career, including its formulation and dissemination via audiovisual and print media (1997), as well as her insightful look at subsequent popular mediated musical phenomena of Egypt (1996).

Walter Armbrust has provided a compact overview of the media's impact upon music in Egypt (2002), and a number of more extended meditations upon music-media phenomena, especially the careers of two Egyptian musicians: *al-musiqa al-'arabiya* singer and composer Mohamed Abdel Wahhab, and *sha'bi* singer Ahmed Adaweya (1996), as well as a piece in the web-based journal, *Transnational Broadcast Studies* (later renamed *Arab Media & Society*), reproduced in this volume. Under Armbrust's editorship, TBS has published a number of other articles centered on contemporary mediated music (Grippo 2006; Kraidy 2006a, 2006b; Kubala 2005; Pond 2006). Roberta Dougherty (2000) has provided us with a fascinating glimpse of satirical 1930s print media representations of Egyptian entertainer and impresaria Badi'a Masabni (c.1880–1972). Scott Marcus highlights media issues in a chapter devoted to contemporary Egyptian pop (Marcus 2007).

Jonathan Shannon discusses music-media issues in Syria, as well as their global projection into 'world music' (2003a, 2003b, 2006), a topic also

covered by Ted Swedenburg (2001, 2002b). Others trace media issues among Arab Jews of Israel (Galit 2006; Swedenburg 1997). David McDonald has analyzed Palestinian rap (2006, 2009), while Oliver and Steinberg examined cassette-based music of the Palestinian intifada (2002), and El-Ghadban has reviewed recordings by important Palestinian artists (2001). Several scholars have inspected music of the North American Arab diaspora, noting the role of the media in maintaining musical connections to the homeland (El-Ghadban 2001; Rasmussen 1996, 2002; Shryock 2000), while others have examined mediated *rai* and rap in constituting Franco-Maghribi cultural identities (Gross et al. 1992). Numerous studies (Armbrust 1996; Asmar and Hood, 2001; Habib 2005; Racy 1982, 2003; Stone 2008; Zuhur 2001) take up issues of music and the media, at least tangentially. Journalist Andrew Hammond's volume on Arab popular culture provides insightful coverage of the Arab popular music scene (Hammond 2007, chapter 6). I have contributed with research on the history of SonoCairo (Frishkopf 2008b), the 'Spanish tinge' in Arab popular music (2003), and mediated Qur'anic recitation (2009).

English-language studies examining music and the media in Iraq and the Gulf region are comparatively scarce. Laith Ulaby has treated music and mass media in the Arab Persian Gulf (2006; 2008, chapter 7), while Neil van der Linden touches on the role of media in the decline of the Iraqi *maqam* tradition (2001), as does Yeheskel Kojaman (2001). The mediation of music in North Africa (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia) has received better coverage (Davis 1996; Langlois 2009); a Francophone connection has also helped propel musical traditions of this area to world music fame, especially Algerian *rai* (Gross, McMurray, and Swedenburg 1992b; Langlois 1996; Mazouzi 2002; McMurray and Swedenburg 1991; Schade-Poulsen 1999; Swedenburg 2003), Moroccan *gnawa* (Gross et al. 1992; Kapchan 2007; Langlois 1998), and that "four thousand year old rock'n'roll band," Master Musicians of Jajouka (Schuyler 2000).

A number of scholars have attended to issues of music and media relations for ethnic-linguistic minority groups of the Arab world, often nearly invisible to the vast majority of Arabic speakers, including the popular music of Berbers (Goodman 2002, 2005), Nubians (Swedenburg 2002a), Bedouins (Abu-Lughod 1989), and Kurds (Blum and Hassanpour 1996).

Beyond music, scholars in anthropology, religious studies, and political science have begun to study the interaction of media and expressive culture in the Middle East, especially in the wake of the satellite TV revolution (Abu-Lughod 1989, 2005; Hirschkind 2006; Miller 2007). While a large number

of media studies scholars have addressed Arab media systems, particularly satellite television and the Internet (Alterman 1998; *Arab media in the information age* 2005; *Arab Media Survey* 2003; Boyd 1999; Fandy 2005, 2007; Hafez 2008; Sakr 2007a; Zayani 2004, 2005; Zayani and Sahraoui 2007), their research has only occasionally centered on music. Exceptions include Rasha Abdulla's study of music television in Egypt (1996), and substantial attention to music in several books by prolific media scholar Naomi Sakr (2001, 2007b). Recently, two economists have tackled the Arab music industry under rubrics of creative industries and intellectual property, using theoretical models and quantitative techniques suggesting exciting new directions for future work (Harabi 2009; Rizk 2009).

Arab music today is overwhelmingly mediated, with a vast audience. Together with its associated social discourses and practices, this music forms a coherent transnational intermedia world, a 'music media culture' of tremendous significance for well over 200 million native Arabic speakers worldwide. Yet, despite the existence of the aforementioned works, the key relations of music and media in the Arab world remain significantly understudied in relation to their social importance. Arab critics and journalists have provided copious quantities of perspicacious commentary on music and the media, but this body of writing has remained largely inaccessible to readers not fluent in the Arabic language.

Thus, in the fall of 2003 I proposed to Gerry D. Scott, director of the American Research Center in Egypt, that ARCE host a conference entitled "Music and Television in Egypt," as an explicitly bilingual and polyperspectival endeavor. He offered enthusiastic support.

The two-day conference aimed to gather a diverse group, to explore a wide range of themes connected with the social, cultural, political, economic, and technological histories of music and television in Egypt, raising key questions such as: How does TV represent music in Egypt today? How has TV transformed music into a new visual art? What are the meanings and consequences of this transformation? What is the impact of televised music on popular taste? How are gender and sexuality constructed by music videos? How has television transformed the music economy?

Eighteen presenters—including scholars (from ethnomusicology, music criticism, anthropology, and media studies), journalists and critics, creative writers, TV/cinema directors, a filmmaker, a music producer and composer, and an audio engineer—offered insights, in Arabic and English. Many others

attended these sessions as listeners and interlocutors. Most participants were Egyptians, while others were visitors from abroad. Beyond formal paper presentations, issues were further explored in open discussions. Debate was stirred, food consumed, conversations started.

But the conference was limited in several respects. The focus was on Egypt, and on television. And while the Cairo location was ideal for the inclusion of intellectual voices from the Arab world, it also excluded many others who could not travel to Cairo at that time. So afterward I sought to assemble a more permanent published record, expanding on conference themes and participants, in order to document histories, issues, and debates surrounding the relation of music and media in the early twenty-first century.

This book is unusual for combining and balancing multiple perspectives in a complementary fashion, including three discursive modes (historical, analytical, and critical) and two languages (Arabic and English).[30] Most English-language collections about Arab culture and society comprise interpretive essays (analytical or historical) by academics, writing (in English) in what is often presumed to be a neutral, universal metadiscourse of scholarship, marked by a claim (implied or explicit) to 'objectivity' about the target cultural system, as supported by apparent reliance on pure reason and empirical documentation, and avoidance of value judgments. Here, interpretations drawn directly from discursive practices of the culture under consideration are engaged as data, grist for the academic mill. But whatever their claims to neutrality, such essays are nevertheless always theoretically opinionated—sometimes explicitly so—at least within the scholarly metalanguage itself. This scholarship attempts to stand outside the target system, even as it can never succeed in standing outside all such systems. Nevertheless, it typically enters the target system (directly or indirectly), via distribution by transnational media that have undermined bounded discursive systems smaller than the global one.

These historical and analytical essays contrast (to a great extent—no sharp oppositions can ever be drawn) with the style adopted by the public intellectual, the journalist, the essayist. Working in a critical mode, and typically participating fully in the target system, these authors are not reluctant to adopt an explicit axiological stand (aesthetic or ethical) within the cultural world under consideration. While the critical mode appears ethnocentric and even ethically dubious when adopted by those generally regarded as 'outsiders,' it achieves greater authority when adopted by insiders, those viewed as members of the group generating the cultural practices being commented upon, whose critiques are accepted as instances of those practices.

In an attempt to blur boundaries (and de-privilege the 'scholarly'), as well as to introduce Arabic discourse to a broader audience, this collection combines historical and analytical essays (by both Arab and non-Arab scholars, it should be noted, since no facile identification of identity and discourse is possible) with critical ones coming from within the Arab world itself. The latter recursively comment on Arab discourse, while simultaneously entering into it. They are referenced by the former on two levels—as engagable opinion, and as 'data.'

If media have induced a new coherence within Arab music by linking what were formerly more localized musical practices into an interconnected whole, they have done the same at the level of both critical and analytical/historical discourses about music, and for two reasons. First, because the object of such discourses comprises an increasingly mediated world of greater interconnectivity, as the circulatory radii of musical words, images, and sounds are much larger than before. Second, because critical and analytical discourses about music are themselves embedded in the same mediated world, and hence subject to the same processes.

The upshot is a striking coherence among the essays of this volume as they reference common keywords (see Figure 5). Using techniques drawn from social network analysis enables one to grasp the extent of this interconnectivity.

	Keyword	Number of referencing chapters
1	satellite TV	15
2	video clips	14
3	Ruby	8
4	Abdel Halim Hafez	5
5	Mohamed Abdel Wahhab	5
6	Rotana	5
7	Umm Kulthum	5
8	Alwaleed bin Talal	4
9	Haifa Wehbe	4
10	Nancy Ajram	4
11	*sha'bi*	4
12	Armbrust	3
13	Egyptian TV	3
14	Melody	3

15	mobile phone	3
16	Shaaban Abdel Rahim	3
17	song competitions	3
18	Ahmed Adaweya	2
19	Al-Barghouti	2
20	Egyptian Radio	2
21	Elmessiri	2
22	Frishkopf	2
23	LBC	2
24	Mazzika	2
25	Sami Yusuf	2
26	Sayyid Qutb	2

Figure 5: A sample of recurring keywords (including author names), and the number of chapters in which they occur.

Out of this data, I developed a two-mode affiliation network linking each of the fifteen authors to his or her keywords, from which I derived a one-mode network in which the connectivity between two authors is proportional to the number of keywords they share (Scott 2000, 38–49). Such a network can be visualized in two dimensions, using a force-equilibrium algorithm to position authors according to their connectivity: well-connected authors are positioned closer together (Kamada and Kawai 1989). The resulting map (see Figure 6) indicates which chapters are most central

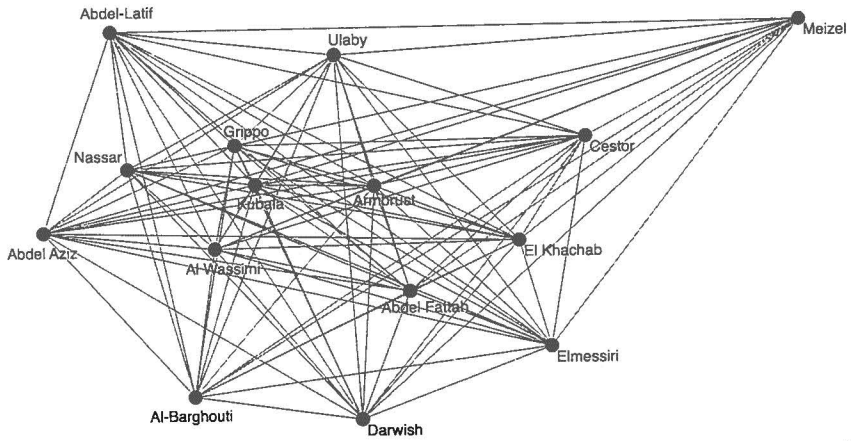

Figure 6: One-mode network of chapter authors, based on a two-mode affiliation network linking authors and keywords.

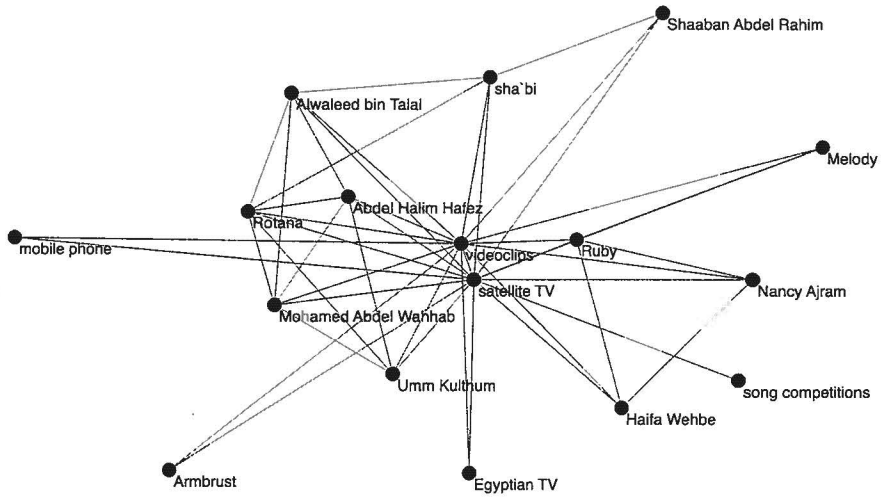

Figure 7: One-mode network of keywords, based on a two-mode affiliation network linking authors and keywords. Weakly connected keywords have been deleted.

to the volume's discourse, with respect to the keywords sample. Conversely, developing a measure of keyword connectivity (proportional to the number of shared authors) enables visualization of keyword centrality (Figure 7). The strong connections among authors and keywords are a manifestation, in microcosm, of the Arab music media scene in general, which is likewise compact. This compactness should not be surprising, since, as I claimed at the outset, *Music and Media in the Arab world* is itself an instance of music and media in the Arab world.

Unfortunately uniform coverage of the Arab world proved impossible for this volume. My research base in Cairo, the site of the conference, and the undeniable influence of Cairo throughout the past century all conspired to bias the results toward Egypt. This bias is not intolerable, since Cairo remains a primary center of the mediated music business, even if it is less central than before.

But country-by-country coverage is decreasingly necessary, because the new Arab music media diminish the importance of national boundaries, by continually crossing them. Rather, they tend to reinforce—or even construct—broader collectivities, along multiple lines of region, class, gender, religion, and other dimensions of identity. The warning once issued in ethnomusicology against reifying 'musical regions' is far less germane today,

when lived reality is to a large extent constituted by media realities of broad scope. Once one shifts attention from live to mediated music, considerable diversity simply collapses.

In any case, the present volume is not offered as an encyclopedic documentation of the relation of music and media systems in the Arab world, but only as an *incipit* for future writing, offering documention, analysis, criticism, queries, and pathways for others—engaged in multiple quests for knowledge, value, explanation, understanding, or social change—to take up. All such writing will find a place both as *discourse about* music media, and as *instance of* music media, blurring the lines between critical and analytical/historical genres, and serving to connect discourses, authors, and readers across linguistic and cultural divides.

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Notes

1 "No universally accepted definition of 'the Arab world' exists, but it is generally assumed to include the twenty-two countries belonging to the Arab League that have a combined population of about 280 million" (Seib 2005, 604). For the purposes of this introduction, this territorial definition is combined with a linguistic one (use of the Arabic language, or its recognition as critical to identity), and

thereby extended into multiple diasporas, especially in the Americas, Europe, Southeast Asia, West Africa, and Australia.

2 Furthermore, AUC Press, publishing literature and scholarship across a wide array of subjects in the social sciences and humanities, and dedicated to local, regional, as well as international distribution, occupies a critical interstitial position in contemporary Arab discourse and culture. One need only recall the Press's unprecedented decision to translate and publish Naguib Mahfouz, leading to his 1989 Nobel prize in literature: "In December 1985, the AUC Press signed a comprehensive publishing agreement with Naguib Mahfouz, thus becoming his primary English-language publisher as well as his worldwide agent for all translation rights; prior to the award of the Nobel prize in 1988 the Press had already published nine Mahfouz novels in English and licensed numerous editions in other languages. As Mahfouz wrote after receiving the Nobel prize, 'it was through the translation of these novels into English . . . that other publishers became aware of them and requested their translation into other foreign languages, and I believe that these translations were among the foremost reasons for my being awarded the Nobel prize.'" (Naguib Mahfouz in "About Naguib Mahfouz" 2009).

3 See Aulas (1982) and Waterbury (1983).

4 For a sophisticated analysis of parallel cassette phenomena in India, see Manuel (1993).

5 Membership of the Popular Music Section of the Society for Ethnomusicology currently exceeds 500, around 20 percent of the full society (see http://pmssem.tamu.edu/, http://fsearch-sandbox.jstor.org/journals/sem.html).

6 This visual preference, in turn, stems from semiotic problems (corresponding to what Charles Seeger termed the "linguo-centric predicament" (1961, 78)), reinforced (in practice) by semiotic strategies (required by the academic field) for converting the symbolic capital of research into the economic capital of academic advancement (cf. Bourdieu 1975).

7 Thus for instance the repertoire of Egypt's national Arab music ensemble, Firqat al-Musiqa al-'Arabiya, performing in Cairo's venerable Opera House as an 'art music' ensemble, has gradually expanded its aesthetic boundaries, from the nineteenth-century repertoire of *adwar, muwashshahat,* and *qasa'id* for whose revival it was established in 1967 (and for which it was still famed when I first encountered the group in 1990), to include works made famous by principal Arab stars of the middle twentieth century, starting with Umm Kulthum and Mohamed Abdel Wahhab, and including such contemporary figures as Hani Shaker (b. 1952) or Sherine Abdel Wahhab (b. 1980) today. (See El-Shawan 1980, 86ff.)

8 On the historicity of the social construction of Arab music *(al-musiqa al-'arabiya)*, see my forthcoming article "The emergence of 'Arab music.'"

9 As Kirsha, café proprietor in Naguib Mahfouz's *Midaq Alley*, tells the local poet-singer (who has been entertaining his patrons for years): "People today don't want a poet. They keep asking me for a radio and there's one over there being installed now. So go away and leave us alone and may God provide for you . . . ." (Mahfouz 1984).

10 As the BBC's Heather Sharp correctly assessed, "stars used to make video clips—now video clips make stars" (Sharp 2005).

11 Umm Kulthum's early training centered on Islamic genres (Danielson 1997) but even celebrated Lebanese diva, Fairouz, a Christian, learned to chant Qur'anic verses early in her career.

12 Saudi Prince Alwaleed bin Talal owns the Rotana family of video channels (see http://www.rotana.net/Video), including music, cinema, and a relatively liberal Islamic channel, Al Resalah, whose preachers do not condemn music and which even features Islamic song. At the other extreme, however, is Al Majd, an Islamic satellite network broadcasting no music whatsoever; background sound is drawn from the natural environment (for example, wind) (Basma 2008).

13 For instance, a 1974 study found that a third of Kuwaitis listened to Egyptian radio at least weekly (Boyd 1993).

14 "Some of the most heavily guarded sites in the Arab world are state television and radio buildings." (Campagne 2008).

15 Qur'anic recitation was first recorded on cassette by Shaykh Muhammad al-Tablawi (Nelson 2001, 197).

16 According to recent research by economists, large Egyptian firms account for 70–80 percent of production, while another 20 small firms account for an additional 20–30 percent (Harabi 2009, 13).

17 See http://www.amrdiab.net as well as http://youtube.com (for example, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OI-6YsW8QoU) for multiple instances. Nancy Ajram recently completed a television commercial for Coca Cola, for a reported record $2 million. Connections to music videos are explicit in Arab print media: "The singer has revealed that she was very interested in doing the commercial especially due to the fact that the idea of it is very similar to a music video" ("Nancy Ajram Quenches Her Thirst with Coca Cola" 2005).

18 The best example of such auto-advertising is Ruby's video clip, "Leh biydari kida." Ruby is discussed in a number of the following chapters; see especially those by Darwish, Abdel Fattah, and Elmessiri.

19 Beyond this tolerance the clip may backfire; witness, for instance, the public outcry over the Tunisian singer Najla, leading to the ban of her video clips even on private transnational satellite TV ("Najla Takes Off Her Pants" 2006).

20 All six appear on http://www.rotana.net/Video/ (July 17, 2010).

21 http://4shbab.tv/ (July 17, 2010).

22 "Humma malhum bina ya leel" (What Have They To Do with Us?), starring Haytham Said, and directed, ironically enough, by Sherif Sabri (who also created Ruby's controversial clips; see Darwish in this volume).

23 Wooden lattice panels that screened the windows of traditional Arab homes.

24 Estimated Internet access in Egypt increased by a factor of 125 during one decade (1998 to 2008), from 100,000 to over 12.5 million users. During the same period Internet access in the USA increased by only 2.6 times (UNdata 2010).

25 In 2009, the top Lebanese singer was earning USD$40,000 per wedding (Rizk 2009).

26 Exceptions include notable male-female rai duets of late, for example, "Einak" by the Lebanese Amal Hegazy and the Algerian-French Cheb Faudel, which appear designed to introduce rai music (ironically both North African, and global) to a broader Arab listenership.

27 From Paris, North African music stars such as Khaled and Cheb Mami have become far better known in 'world music' circles than their Middle Eastern Arab counterparts, having thus come to represent Arab popular music to the world (Langlois 1996; McMurray and Swedenburg 1991; Hammond 2007, 176).

28 Hisham Abbas's 2001 hit "Nari narayn" (in collaboration with the Carnatic singer Jayashri) featured Indian musical sounds and images, Kathakali dancers, and Hindi lyrics.

29 Lillie Gordon explores Cairo's alternative spaces in a recent article (2008); an Egyptian alternative music label is 100 copies (http://www.100copies.com/), whose name derives from the limited print-run of each new release. Both attract a predominantly Westernized, educated, elite crowd, exceedingly marginal by comparison to Egypt's population. In smaller, wealthier Arab societies (for example, Beirut) alternative music enjoys a proportionately broader audience. (See Al-Zubaidi 2006; Tarbush 2007.)

30 For assistance with this daunting task, I am grateful to the American Research Center in Egypt for financial support, and to the distinguished novelist and translator Somaya Ramadan (whose work has also been published by AUC Press). Likewise, I thank *Al-Ahram Weekly* for providing their translation of Dr. Abdel-Wahab Elmessiri's piece, and Marwa Zein Nassar, for translating her father's essay.

Historical Reflection